

# SPIRITUAL



A Catholic  
Quarterly

# LIFE

Volume 4, No. 2

May, 1958

## A MARIAN ISSUE:

*Fr. Richard (Madden), O.C.D.*

*Fr. Otilio of the Child Jesus, O.C.D.*

*Fr. William G. Most*

*Sr. Annice, C.S.C.*

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# SPIRITUAL LIFE

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FATHER WILLIAM OF THE INFANT JESUS, O.C.D., Editor

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## Contents

Editorial . . . . .	98
The Virgin Mary, Perfect Model of the Interior Life . . .	101
<i>Father Otilio of the Child Jesus, O.C.D.</i>	
Consecration to Mary . . . . .	108
<i>Father William G. Most</i>	
Mary All Beautiful . . . . .	118
<i>Sister Mary Annice, C.S.C.</i>	
Spirituality and the Lay Community . . . . .	130
<i>Ed Willock</i>	
Queen of Humility Street . . . . .	138
<i>Mother Marie Vandenberg, R.C.</i>	
Marian Sunrise . . . . .	145
<i>Rev. Eugene Cullinane</i>	
Truth and Human Fellowship . . . . .	146
<i>Jacques Maritain</i>	

## BOOK REVIEWS

Mother of God, by Father Cyril Bernard, O.D.C. . . . .	164
Queen of Heaven, by René Lauretin . . . . .	165
The American Parish and the Roman Liturgy, by Rev. H. H. Reinhold	166
Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement, by Paul B. Marx, O.S.B.	167
One in Christ, by Illtud Evans . . . . .	169
Methods of Prayer in the Directory of the Carmelite Reform of	
Touraine, by Father Kilian J. Healy, O.Carm. . . . .	170
The Celtic Saints, by Daphne D. C. Pochin Mold . . . . .	173
Saint Bernadette Soubirous, by Monsignor Francis Trochu . . .	174
The Walled Garden, by Hugh Ross Williamson . . . . .	176
The Christian Life, by Sister Jane Marie Murray, O.P. . . . .	178
Frontiers in American Catholicism, by Walter J. Ong., S.J. . . .	180
Freud, Psychoanalysis, Catholicism, by Peter J. R. Dempsey, O.F.M.Cap.	181
The Sacred Heart in the Life of the Church, by Margaret Williams	182
Conferences on the Religious Life, by Rev. Aloysius Biskupek, S.V.D.	184

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# Editorial

IN THOSE days they got up in the morning; but it was all so useless. They worked and they played and they rested. Sometimes they were good; sometimes, bad. But it didn't really matter. There wasn't much point to anything, not even life. You see, they had no hope.

They were the living wreckage of original sin. The gates of heaven had clanged shut under the strong hand of an offended God; the flood of divine grace had dried up in its course to earth. So the world stood steeped and stung by the sin of Adam and Eve, our parents, who left their children as their only heritage: death, suffering, ignorance, and the sting of the flesh. And rejection. Never to enjoy the sight of God, never to know Him, never to walk with Him: this was the condition of the world.

Then, with a force more devastating and far reaching than any atomic bomb, with a brilliant, bewitching magic of beauty, a girl was born; and with her coming, earth began its peace talks with heaven. Her name was Mary.

Maybe she *looked* like any other baby but she certainly *wasn't*. None like her had ever been born before; none like her would ever be born again. For she was unique. She was the only person ever born who came into this world untouched by the blight of original sin. And she was the one for whom we all waited. Even God.

If this girl were to be the mother of God then she had to be worthy of Him. She had to be sinless as the Son of God was sinless. She had to be beautiful in order to give to her Son a perfectly beautiful body. Small wonder then that she was the chosen one. We ourselves had no choice as to whom our mothers would be; Christ did. He had the privilege of picking His own Mother. But that was no

job. Mary faced no competition. She was far and away the greatest woman in all the world. And if we look at it in this way, Christ had no choice after all. She stood alone and magnificent; no other woman ever had a chance. No other woman even came close. A choice between what is the greatest and what is only great is really no choice at all.

Further, to say that Christ took Mary as His mother so that He would look like her and walk like her and speak like her is overdoing it a bit; yet, who would dare say that Christ would resent what people said of Him as He walked along the streets of Nazareth with Mary: "My, but isn't He just like His mother!"

She never would have prayed for such a privilege; she would have been honored beyond all measure if she could have been even the handmaid of the Mother of God. But when the thing was put before her, she wanted to do only God's will. And when, in the face of her exalted position as first lady of the world, Elizabeth praised her, Mary could only say, "For He who is mighty has done great things to me."

One thing is certain: while on earth she didn't stand in some niche all day, clothed in blue with folded hands and downcast eyes. She had a job to do. And she did it. She gave birth to Jesus in a foul-smelling stable and tried to keep Him warm by bundling Him in rags. She raised Him, trained Him; made a man of Him. Then got out of His way when it was time for Him to go out on the highways of the world in His quest for immortal souls. But when the tide of public opinion turned against Him, and He began His long trek up the hill of Calvary, she was on hand. She followed Him. And as He died, slowly and bitterly, she stood at the foot of His cross, her arm flung around its upright so that His blood would not trickle into the ground. And the world pointed its finger at her and said, "There's His mother." Indeed, there she was at the foot of His cross. Her usual position in the death of all men; for wherever and whenever we suffer our own crucifixions, not on a cross of wood but on the cross of life itself, there she will be always.

Our problem: we don't take her seriously. Christ gave her to us from His cross but we don't really believe it. She's the Mother of God, we know that; that's why we kneel before her statues and



light vigil lights at her feet. But as for her being our mother, we just can't get used to the idea. She's a bit too exalted, too sublime, too big for us; so we forget the part she played as a central figure in our personal redemption.

She started things moving at Cana. She asked her Son to perform a miracle. She knew that when He did, His divinity would be made manifest. And when that happened, all the snakes in Jerusalem would awaken to make plans for His swift destruction. She knew this. She knew that when He went to Calvary, she would go with Him, every inch of the way. But she wasn't concerned about her own comfort, she was concerned only with our redemption which could come about only through the death of her Son. So she said, "They have no wine" and started Him on His way to crucifixion.

We cannot be as great as that but we can certainly try. We cannot imitate her in her sinlessness but we can aim at all the human greatness she possessed. We can transform ourselves if we watch her. We can become better people making a far better contribution to society than we have been making. Then when we are dead, they can lay us below the sod and inscribe upon our tombstone, "Here lies one who in life was just like his mother."

FATHER RICHARD (MADDEN), O.C.D.  
*Associate Editor*

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# The Virgin Mary, Perfect Model of the Interior Life

*Father Otilio of the Child Jesus, O.C.D.*

*"Christians should, in so far as possible, conform  
their lives to the image of the same Virgin."*

(Pius XII, encyclical, *Fulgens Corona*;  
cf. AAS, 45 [1953], p. 584)

IN ORDER to define the limits of our article, we shall begin by explaining, briefly, what we mean when we use the terms: *interior life* and *model*.

To live an interior life signifies not only to live the actual state of transitory or passing grace, as it would be the case of an habitual sinner who repents and comes to the Sacrament of Penance and receives absolution for his sins. But it rather signifies an habitual state of grace in which a person is not contented with possessing the essential elements of every spiritual life, but forces himself moveover to develop its growth in the soul with the theological and moral virtues under the sweet influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we refer not only to the souls that live in what is juridically called the state of perfection, but to every generous soul which, convinced of its obligations of living a perfect Christian life, forces itself in a constant and progressive manner to make up in itself what is deficient in the tribulations of Christ which is His Body (Col. 1:24). Such a state presupposes a program of the spiritual life whose essential part is prayer, the presence of God, practice of the various virtues, practice of mortification, examination of conscience, and the other exercises of piety



that tend to root it in a state of intimacy with God and to conform its will, more and more, with that of God, the goal of every life of perfection.

Of this kind of life, we affirm that the most holy Virgin is a perfect model, not only in a figurative sense, which signifies a person worthy to be imitated, but in the strict and proper sense of an *exemplar* or *form* that by its own perfection can be followed or imitated. Therefore, uniting these two concepts, we say that the Virgin Mary has lived an interior life so perfect that she has become the most excellent model or exemplar that can be proposed to spiritual souls.

\*     \*     \*

To demonstrate that the Virgin Mary is a perfect model of the interior life we can follow two ways: one, traditional in Marian theology, that is, to go to the founts of revelation such as the infallible magisterium of the Church proposes her as such; comparing this with tradition and the doctrine of the fathers, doctors, and theologians; or, better still, choosing a synthetic outline of the spiritual life, and proving its verification in the person of the Virgin. The first way would be more complete, but it would be too long and would require more space than is allotted to us in these pages; the second is shorter, but sufficient for our scope, and is a short cut that more rapidly and directly will lead us to the limits of our theme without sacrificing anything of its solidity or beauty; and for this reason, we have decided to choose this second way in these few pages.

Now if we search for a synthetic outline of the interior life, certainly no one is more authorized and more competent to help us than the great mystical doctor, St. John of the Cross.

He has masterfully summarized all that refers to the interior life, under the poetical symbol or metaphor of the mystical Mount Carmel, and all his writings — so varied in style — are intimately bound together by the golden thread of a common scope or purpose: "the manner of ascending to the summit of the Mount, which is the high estate of perfection which we here call union of the soul with God" (*Ascent*, Argument); or in other words: to attain to the Divine Light of the perfect union of the love of God, as far as is possible in this life" (*ibid.*, Prologue).



To arrive at the summit the soul must pass through the terrible nights of sense and spirit in which it is voided of all that can impede the union of which we have spoken, namely, the appetites, affections, and sentiments:

. . . any soul that will ascend this mount in order to make of itself an altar whereon it may offer to God the sacrifice of pure love and praise and pure reverence, must, before ascending to the summit of the mount, have done these three things aforementioned perfectly. First, it must cast away all strange gods — namely, all strange affections and attachments; secondly, it must purify itself of the remnants which the desires aforementioned have left in the soul, by means of the dark night of sense whereof we are speaking, habitually denying them and repenting itself of them; and thirdly, in order to reach the summit of this high mount, it must have changed its garments, which, through its observance of the first two things, God will change for it, from old to new, by giving it a new understanding of God in God, the old human understanding being cast aside; and a new love of God in God, the will being now stripped of all its old desires and human pleasures, and the soul being brought into a new state of knowledge and profound delight, all other old images and forms of knowledge having been cast away, and all that belongs to the old man, which is the aptitude of the natural self, quelled, and the soul clothed with a new supernatural aptitude with respect to all its faculties . . . (*Ascent*, Bk. I, Chap. V, n. 7).

As can be seen, all his doctrine is a faithful echo of the Pauline thought contained in another expressive metaphor: "to put off the old man, and to put on the New Adam" (Eph. 4:22), which is nothing else than to copy in one's life the image of Christ:

First, let him have an habitual desire to imitate Christ in everything that he does, conforming himself to His life; upon which life he must meditate so that he may know how to imitate it, and to behave in all things as Christ would behave (*Ascent*, Bk. I, Chap. XIII, n. 3).

When the soul has done all this, it will arrive at the perfect transformation of its senses, intellect, and will in Christ. However, in this transformation there are infinite grades, according to the principle of St. John of the Cross: "there can be no perfect transformation if there be not perfect purity, and the enlightenment, illumination, and union of the soul with God will be in proportion to its purity, in a greater or in less degree" (*Ascent*, Bk. II, Chap. V, n. 8).

These different degrees of union are verified according to the illumination that the *Living Flame of Love* works in the soul, that is, the Holy Spirit, whose effect is to take possession of the soul in such a way as to transform and to unite itself with the

soul in an intimate friendship or spiritual matrimony.

In this transformation the soul does not work or move except under the influence of the Holy Spirit, so that from Him all its actions proceed. The soul has arrived at the heights of the mystical Mount Carmel.

Now it is here that we find the sublime spiritual beauty of the soul of Mary, perfect model of the interior life. Because, according to the same holy author, the soul of the Blessed Virgin, from the first moment of her conception, was placed in this highest degree of perfection. These are the words of St. John: "Such were those [actions] of the most glorious Virgin Our Lady, who, being raised to this high estate from the beginning, had never the form of any creature imprinted in her soul, neither was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit" (*Ascent*, Bk. III, Chap. II, n. 10).

In other words, the Virgin Mary began her spiritual career at the same point that is for the other souls the goal and terminus, and this from the first moment of her existence, i.e., from her Immaculate Conception.

This Mariological principle of St. John of the Cross contains in itself consequences of the highest beauty and importance for demonstrating that the Virgin is the perfect model of the interior life. Let us enumerate some of them very briefly:

1. *The Virgin Mary enjoyed the use of reason — by a special privilege — from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception.*

The deduction is logical if Mary was placed in this high degree of grace of union with God from the first moment of her existence. This could not be done in an extrinsic and violent manner, without the co-operation of human reason, which is the only element that distinguishes men from animals. This interesting theological position of the Saint — a brilliant alumnus of the University of Salamanca — is to be noted at a time in which theologians were very undecided and divided in regard to this point, under the powerful influence of authors such as Gerson, St. Thomas, Cajetan, etc., — who although very devoted and great servants of Mary — did not admit such a privilege in Mary because it seemed to be reserved exclusively for Christ. Today this doctrine is commonly admitted by Mariologists.



2. *The Virgin Mary surrendered herself absolutely and totally to the will of God from the first instant of her existence.*

This is the same as affirming that the transforming union, goal of the interior life, at which only generous souls arrive after having passed through the terrible nights of the sense and the spirit in which they are purified of all its earthly appetites, was realized in Mary in the first moment of her existence. Thus she had no need of passing through these terrible nights since united to God from the first beatings of her heart, her soul was filled with grace so that it made her a most worthy mold in which the Sacred Humanity of Christ was to be formed. For this reason the Archangel saluted her as full of grace even before the most humble Virgin gave her salutary *fiat* to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word. This detail is most important because it demonstrates how, within the plenitude of her grace, there is possible progress and development in the soul of the Virgin, at least qualitatively in the sense that when the grace of the Divine Maternity was conceded to her, the *Living Flame of Love*, i.e., the Holy Spirit, produced in her new splendors or degrees of love that St. John of the Cross calls an "overshadowing":

... to understand this it must be realized that "overshadowing" means the casting of a shadow, and for a man to cast his shadow over another signifies that he protects him and grants him favors. When the shadow touches the person, this is a sign that he who overshadows him is now near to befriend and protect him. For this reason it was said to the Virgin, that the power of the Highest would overshadow her, because the Holy Spirit was to approach her so nearly that He would come upon her (*Living Flame*, III, 12).

3. *The Virgin Mary responded with admirable fidelity to the motion and influence of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost from her Immaculate Conception until her death.*

This is the fundamental content of the Marian text of the Holy Father upon which we are commenting. In this way the Saint records three episodes of the life of the Virgin as examples of this Marian fidelity perfectly united and transformed in God; namely,

- a) At the moment of the Incarnation, as we have already said;
- b) At the wedding feast of Cana when Mary maternally intervened to avoid a situation full of anxiety for the bridal couple, using her intercession with her Divine Son in a manner so discreet, and so submissive to His will that she did

not importune Him again and again, but simply indicated her need, accepting the divine disposition: "For one that loves discreetly has no care to beg for that which he lacks and desires, but only shows forth his need, so that the Beloved may do that which seems good to Him. As when the Blessed Virgin spoke to the Beloved Son at the wedding of Cana of Galilee, not begging Him directly for wine, but saying to Him: 'They have no wine'" (*Spiritual Canticle*, II, 8).

c) At her death, because although the Saint does not cite this explicitly, now we can apply in an eminent way what he says of the natural death of persons transformed in God:

"The webs which can hinder this union and which must be broken if the soul is to approach God and possess Him perfectly may be said to be three, namely: the temporal, which comprises all creatures; the natural, which comprises the operations and inclinations that are purely natural; and the third, the sensual, which comprises only union of the soul in the body, which is sensual and animal life, whereof St. Paul says: We know that if this our earthly house be dissolved we have a dwelling place in God in the heavens. The first two webs must of necessity be broken in order that we may attain to this possession of the union of God, wherein all things of the world are put aside and renounced, and all the natural affections and appetites are mortified, and the operations of the soul, from being natural, become divine. All this was broken and effected in the soul by the oppressive encounters of this flame when it was oppressive to it; for, through spiritual purgation, as we have said above, the soul succeeds in breaking these two webs and thence in becoming united with God, as it now is, and there remains to be broken only the third web of this life of sense. For this reason the soul here speaks of a web and not of webs; for there is now no other web to be broken than this, which, being already so delicate and fine and so greatly spiritualized by this union with God, is not attacked by the flame severely, as were the two others, but sweetly and delectably. For this reason the soul speaks here and calls the encounter 'sweet,' for it is the sweeter and the more delectable inasmuch as the soul believes it to be about to break the web of life" (*Living Flame*, I, 29).

If the Holy Doctor could affirm this of the souls that arrive at the perfect transformation of love, all the more reason and in a more eminent reason it can be applied to Mary. And as a matter of fact, this point is commonly admitted by more eminent Mariologists, e.g., Alastruey, Terrien, Lepicier, Roschini, etc., following a theological tradition that dates back to the time of Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine.

4. *The Virgin Mary arrived at a grade of interior life and sanctification superior to that of all the angels and saints, individually as well as collectively considered, and, after Christ, there is no model that can be compared to her in sublimity and in perfection.*

This is a consequence of all the preceding considerations. Because if, as the Saint affirms: "the grade of union depends on the degree of illumination and this on the grade of purity," what purity of soul can be compared with that of the Virgin, who was pure from the first moment of her existence? This is the true theological reason of this greatness of Mary and in its light the



testimony of so many holy Fathers and Doctors becomes more understandable and no longer appears to be a pious exaggeration of Mariology, but the logical consequence of a solid theological principle. And this not only insofar as it refers to the evolution of grace and the exercise of the virtues, but also to the intensity of her interior life of contemplation and union with God, so that a Carmelite Mariologist — the greatest that the Teresian Carmel has ever produced — affirmed that all the sublime states of the soul that St. John of the Cross describes in his most sublime work — the *Living Flame of Love* — “are as a shadow” of the graces that the Blessed Virgin enjoyed from the first moment of her existence (cf. Quirogo, *Life of the Madonna Virgin Mary*, Bk. I, Chap. 28, n. 6).

\*     \*     \*

This sublime thought of St. John of the Cross regarding the Virgin Mary, the magisterium of the Church has made its own in proposing to souls this life of the Virgin for imitation. We could cite here many documents of Leo XIII and St. Pius X. But in order not to lengthen this article we will close, citing this text of Pius XII in his encyclical of the Marian Year:

Just as all mothers are deeply affected when they perceive that the countenance of their children reflects a peculiar likeness to their own, so also our Most Sweet Mother wishes for nothing more, never rejoices more than when she sees those whom under the cross of her Son, she has adopted as children in his stead, portray the lineaments and ornaments of her own soul in thought, word and deed (Pius XII, encyclical, *Fulgens Corona*; AAS, 45 [1953], p. 584).

A professor at Loras College, Father Most is author of one of the finest and most popular expositions of the spiritual life, to date: *Mary in Our Life*.

## Consecration to Mary

Father William G. Most

GOD, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, has planned that there be many and varied approaches to the spiritual life, so that thereby He might mercifully adapt His ways to the manifold differences found in the sons of men. Some descriptions of the way of perfection make it appear to be a very complex process. To St. John of the Cross, however, it is utterly simple, so simple that it could be summed up in two words: ALL — NOTHING. God is All — to have Him, one needs to void himself of everything that does not help to attain the All. If one has any disordered desire whatsoever, “. . . the more the desire for that thing fills the soul, the less capacity has the soul for God.”<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, “When . . . the soul voids itself of all things . . . it is impossible . . . that God should fail to perform His own part by communicating Himself to the soul at least secretly and in silence. It is more impossible than that the sun should fail to shine in a serene and unclouded sky. . . . God, like the sun, is above our souls and ready to communicate Himself to them.”<sup>2</sup> In the thought of St. John, God not only sincerely wills the salvation of all men: such is His incomprehensible goodness, such His desire to give Himself to all that if the soul does not become filled with God,<sup>3</sup> the reason is not that God for any reason has held back, but solely because the soul failed to do its part by emptying itself to make room for God.

<sup>1</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, 1.6.1 (transl. by E. Allison Peers, Westminster, Md., 1946, I, 34).

<sup>2</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, 3.46–47 (III.185).

<sup>3</sup> St. John means that infused contemplation will certainly be given to the soul that does its part. It may, however, come not in experimental, fruitive form, but “in secret and in silence,” that is, in arid form. Cf. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *St. John of the Cross* (transl. by a Benedictine of Stanbrook Abbey, Cork, 1947), 97.



The goal, then, that St. John proposes is, “. . . union and transformation of the soul with God,” which “comes to pass when the two wills — namely that of the soul and that of God — are conformed together in one, and there is naught in the one that is repugnant to the other.”<sup>4</sup>

It is remarkable how admirably a total consecration to our Lady accords with St. John's principles, and how powerfully it aids the soul in putting these principles into practice. It is true, St. John himself, in his major works, does not point this out, but the reason is not that he did not appreciate the place of Mary in the spiritual life — it is rather the fact that he was intent on a rather speculative presentation of principles. For there is no doubt that St. John in his personal life was greatly devoted to Mary, who seems to have saved his life miraculously<sup>5</sup> on more than one occasion. And was he not a member of a thoroughly Marian Order, enriched with the special favor of her Scapular, of which our present Holy Father wrote: “. . . may it be to them a sign of their consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of the Immaculate Virgin.”<sup>6</sup>

The consecration we have in mind is a total consecration, which one not only makes, but lives out most fully, so that it affects his whole life. Such a total consecration is found in different forms. Probably the best known is that presented by St. Louis de Montfort. The consecration which the saintly Father Chaminade gave to his Society of Mary is substantially the same, differing only, as the eminent Marianist theologian, E. Neubert, says, “in certain nuances.”<sup>7</sup>

To live out a total consecration to Mary means to give oneself completely into her hands by an entire gift of oneself, so that, under the inspiration of her example, and with her all powerful help, he may, as our present Holy Father says, “conform [his] whole life to her direction and desires.”<sup>8</sup> It is obvious, then, that if one really

<sup>4</sup> St. John, *Ascent*, 2.5.3 (I.80).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Crisógono de Jesús Sacramentado, O.C.D., *Vida de San Juan de la Cruz*, in *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz* (Madrid, 1950), p. 44, n. 26; p. 196, n. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Pius XII, *Neminem profecto*, February 11, 1950; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 42.391 (cited from translation in: E. K. Lynch, O.Carm., *Mary's Gift to Carmel*, Aylesford, 1955, viii-ix).

<sup>7</sup> E. Neubert, S.M., *La vie d'union à Marie* (Paris, 1954), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Pius XII, *Depuis le 8 décembre*, September 5, 1954 (To Marian Congress at Brussels, where a total act of consecration to Mary was being made). Cited from *The Pope Speaks*, 1954, 3.282.

gives all to Mary, he must thereby also strive to void himself of everything<sup>9</sup> that would impede him from attaining the All. And if he tries to fulfill not only her commands, but even her *desires*, he must by that very fact tend powerfully toward that "union and transformation of the soul with God" which "comes to pass when the two wills — namely that of the soul and that of God — are conformed together in one. . . ."<sup>10</sup> For if a soul, abandoning its own desires, tries to conform its whole life to her desires, then, since her will is entirely one with the will of God, there will be "naught in the one," the human will, "that is repugnant to the other," the will of God. It is easy to see, therefore, what a great help to spiritual growth comes from such a consecration by the very fact that it so strongly promotes detachment and conformity to the will of God. But we must not forget also, that while our Blessed Mother, the Mediatrix of all graces, cares lovingly for all her children, when she sees that some are giving themselves totally into her hands, she will not be outdone in generosity, but will obtain for them the choicest graces to bring them as close as possible to her divine Son.

Let us examine each of these points more fully.

The power of example is tremendous. The great St. Augustine before his conversion, though he had reached a point at which he no longer felt any intellectual obstacle to entering the Church, yet was held back by his evil life. Speculative considerations on the goodness of virtue were familiar to him, but these did not suffice. The external means through which grace actually led him to change from a great sinner into a great saint was the example of saintly men of his time, of which he read and heard. What then must be the force of the matchless example of Mary, if one places it before his mind by means of frequent meditation!<sup>11</sup> As Pope Pius XII said:

<sup>9</sup> Our Blessed Mother, of course, expects her children to grow *gradually*. Cf. St. John of the Cross, *Ascent*, 1.2.1 (I.19).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. note 4 above.

<sup>11</sup> Of course, meditation on the virtues seen in the human nature of Mary ceases during the passive night, just as does other meditation, and even the thought of the Sacred Humanity of Christ may become impossible at times. However, the presence of Mary is experienced in a special way by some souls during the night, and, when infused contemplation appears in a more developed form, the presence of Mary is sometimes perceived as part of the object of contemplation, in union with the divinity. Cf. Basilio de San Pablo, C.P., "La Maternidad Espiritual de



Anyone who has been consecrated to Mary belongs to her in a special way. . . . The love of Mary gives him the courage to undertake great things, to conquer human respect, to shake off egoism, to serve and to obey patiently. With his interior gaze fixed steadily on her, he falls in love with the purity, the humility, the charity, with which the soul of the Virgin was resplendent.<sup>12</sup>

St. John of the Cross insists that faith, hope, and love are the true means of union with God in this life. Whoever had faith that could compare to Mary's faith? Although her own people, even the divinely approved teachers of Israel, failed to understand the prophecies which told of the divinity of the coming Messiah, although she encountered apparent contradictions to what the Archangel had told her, her faith never wavered. For Gabriel had said that her Son would sit on the throne of David: yet He came into His own, and His own received Him not. He was to be a mighty King forever, yet had to flee from the wrath of the petty Herod. For the thirty years of His hidden life, He seemed to all eyes, except the eyes of faith, to be just an ordinary child — a good child — but still not basically different from the others. Yet Mary never ceased to believe and to adore. Finally, dying in public disgrace, He Himself cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"<sup>13</sup> Yet Mary's faith and hope did not waver, and during those dark three days before the first Easter, when the very pillars of the Church had fallen from belief, she remained almost the sole vessel of faith upon the earth. In fact, since our Lord Himself, because He always possessed the Beatific Vision, was incapable of having the virtues of faith and hope, it is plain that Mary's faith and hope were greater than those of any other soul.

Again, it is good for us to try — though the attempt can never fully succeed — to picture to ourselves Mary's love of God. Her divine Son said: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me."<sup>14</sup> The very first picture the Gospels give us

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María en el purgatorio místico," in *Estudios Marianos*, 7 (Madrid, 1948), 241-285; Ildefonso de la Inmaculada, O.C.D., "Elementos Físico-Marianos en la gracia y la mística," in *Estudios Marianos*, 7, 197-240; Gregorio de Jesus Crucificado, O.C.D., "La acción de María en las almas y la Mariología moderna" in *Estudios Marianos*, 11 (Madrid, 1951), 253-278; Buenaventura Garcia-Rodrigues, C.M.F., "María en las almas" in *Estudios Marianos*, 12 (Madrid, 1952), 193-235; and W. G. Most, *Mary in Our Life* (New York, 1954), 131-132, and further references there.

<sup>12</sup> Pius XII, *Au moment où*, July 26, 1954. Cited from *The Pope Speaks*, 1954, 3273-274.

<sup>13</sup> Ps. 21:2.

<sup>14</sup> Jn. 14:21.

of her provides a glimpse of her utter self-effacement before the will of God. The Archangel had just brought the divine message to her. She who at that very moment was raised to the highest dignity of all creatures, to a "dignity second only to God," as Pope Pius XI said,<sup>15</sup> replied by saying: "Behold the slave girl of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word."<sup>16</sup> St. John of the Cross tells us that when a soul reaches the most perfect love and conformity with the will of God, "God alone moves the faculties of these souls to do those works which are meet, according to the will and ordinance of God, and they cannot be moved to do others. . . . Such were those of the most glorious Virgin, our Lady, who, being raised to this high estate from the beginning, had never the form of any creature imprinted in her soul, neither was moved by such, but was invariably guided by the Holy Spirit."<sup>17</sup> Even when St. Joseph, the just man, was tempted to doubt her chastity, and was minded to put her away privately, Mary would not speak one word in her own defense, for such was the will of God. The Holy Spirit, whose ever faithful Spouse she was, had not moved her to defend herself, preferring instead to accept her loving surrender to the divine will, and to inform Joseph through an angel.

Pope Pius IX, in speaking of Mary's holiness (and, therefore, her love, for these are always equal) wrote that it is so great that "none greater under God can be thought of, and no one, except God, can comprehend it."<sup>18</sup> We can comprehend to some extent the sanctity of even so great a saint as St. John of the Cross, with his tremendous austerities and burning love. But were we to multiply his sanctity to the greatest degree of which our minds could conceive, we still would not have formed anything like an adequate idea of Mary's love and holiness, for as Pope Pius IX said, "No one except God can comprehend it"! Here indeed is the perfect example of a soul completely filled with love, completely voided of self — so empty of self that God has made her the channel through which all graces pass to all mankind.

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<sup>15</sup> Pius XI, *Lux veritatis*, December 25, 1931; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 23.513.

<sup>16</sup> Lk. 1:38. Translation adapted to bring out the more exact force of the original Greek word, which normally meant slave girl.

<sup>17</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Ascent*, 3.2.10 (1.230-231). Cf. also *Living Flame of Love*, 1.4, 1.9, and 2.34.

<sup>18</sup> Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 8, 1854.

St. John of the Cross with keen clarity has stressed that all perfection depends on the union of our wills with the will of God. We can do nothing more perfect than to conform our will and our actions as exactly as possible to those of God. Let us see, then, what we can discern of the will of God in regard to Mary.

Many good Catholics, though they have a tender devotion to the Mother of God, may yet fail to realize fully the position which God has willed to give to her in His dealings with us. For although they do have a good knowledge of most of the Marian teachings of the Church, they may not have heard of certain less familiar points, and, what is of particular importance, they never may have added together the various elements of the truth to form a unified picture, and, as a result, fail to learn a most important spiritual lesson.

Let us, therefore, briefly attempt to sketch such a synthesis.

From all eternity, God had planned for the Mother of Christ. As Pope Pius IX said,<sup>19</sup> in the eternal designs of God, our divine Redeemer and His Blessed Mother were provided for in one and the same eternal decree. Hardly had our first parents started mankind on its long course of rejecting the generous advances of God, when the Father, His thoughts bent not on vengeance, but on pardon, at once promised the Redeemer, and, in the very same sentence, spoke of a mysterious Woman who would be associated with Him in crushing the head of the infernal serpent.<sup>20</sup> Many thousands of years later, when the fullness of time had come, the same kind Father began to put His eternal plan into execution by sending the Archangel Gabriel to ask Mary to consent, "in the name of the whole human race," as Pope Leo XIII said,<sup>21</sup> to become the Mother of the Saviour. Then there began what St. Pius X described as a "never dissociated manner of life and labors of the Son and the Mother."<sup>22</sup> Even before His birth, the Saviour brought cleansing grace to the unborn Precursor, St. John the Baptist — and He did it through the instrumentality of His Mother. After

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Gen. 3:15. On the interpretation of this text, cf. E. May, O.F.M.Cap., "Mary in the Old Testament" in J. B. Carol, O.F.M. (ed.), *Mariology* (Milwaukee, 1954), I, 56-62.

<sup>21</sup> Leo XIII, *Octobri mense*, September 22, 1891; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 24.195.

<sup>22</sup> St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, February 2, 1904; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 36.453.



the brief glory of the angel's song at Bethlehem, our Redeemer withdrew with Mary into obscurity, and, though He had come to save the world, deemed it best, according to the will of the Father, that He should go down to Nazareth and be subject to Mary and Joseph,<sup>23</sup> spending thirty of His thirty-three years in that marvelous communion in obscure faith, showing no signs and wonders. During His public life, Mary appears briefly at the very start, revealing her intimate union with Him and her power over His Heart, when He, at her request, performed His first sign, advancing the divinely set hour. Thereafter, during the days when the crowds acclaimed Him, she withdrew into the shadows, but remained ever united to Him in the obscurity of faith, hope, and love, and in meriting for us, for we know that even this time did not interrupt that "*never dissociated manner of life and labors of the Son and the Mother.*"<sup>24</sup> But finally, when the dread hour of the great Sacrifice had come, Mary emerged from the shadows into the far more obscure dark night that hung over Calvary. There, as Pope Benedict XV said, "With her suffering and dying Son, Mary endured suffering and almost death."<sup>25</sup> For her sufferings were proportioned to His indescribable torment, and to her love for Him, which was so great that "no one except God can comprehend it."<sup>26</sup> "She gave up her Mother's rights over her Son to procure the salvation of mankind, and, to appease the divine justice, she, as much as was hers to do, immolated her Son."<sup>27</sup> Therefore, as St. Pius X wrote: "She merited for us congruously . . . what Christ merited con-dignly,"<sup>28</sup> or, to continue with the words of Pope Benedict XV, "one can rightly say that *together with Christ she has redeemed the human race.*" Hence, as most theologians understand these words of the popes, we arrive at the tremendous conclusion that what the Eternal Father accepted as the price of our salvation was a *joint offering*, made by the New Adam, with the co-operation of the New Eve: He, alone sufficient and necessary, alone paying a superabundant ransom; she, in her inferior way, joining in the

<sup>23</sup> Lk. 2:51.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. note 22 above. Emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> Benedict XV, *Inter Sodalicia*, March 22, 1918; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 10.182.

<sup>26</sup> Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*.

<sup>27</sup> Benedict XV, as in note 25 above.

<sup>28</sup> St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 36.454.

offering, so that, to paraphrase St. Pius X, she paid congruously the price that Christ paid condignly. For the goodness and generosity of the Eternal Father was so great that He willed to accept even her lesser, and in itself insufficient, offering, as fused, so to speak, with His great offering, into one great price of the ransom of all.<sup>29</sup>

But the dark night of Calvary soon passed, and the Bridegroom Himself rose in glory. Just as His Resurrection was, in the words of Pope Pius XII, "an essential part and final sign of this victory" over sin and death, "so also that struggle which was *common* to the Blessed Virgin and her Son had to be closed by the 'glorification' of her virginal body."<sup>30</sup> In other words, since Mary's co-operation had been so much an integral part of the obtaining of Redemption that the "struggle . . . was *common*" to both, a common cause had to have a common effect. In Christ, this effect was the Resurrection: in Mary, it would be the Assumption.

Then, in everlasting splendor, "He, the Son of God, reflects on His heavenly Mother the glory, the majesty, and the dominion of His kingship. For, having been associated with the King of Martyrs in the unspeakable work of human Redemption as Mother and Co-operatrix, she remains forever associated to Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of the graces that flow from the Redemption. . . . And her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion."<sup>31</sup> Hence by this "royal power . . . she is able to dispense the treasures of the Kingdom of the Divine Redeemer."<sup>32</sup> Or, as Pope Leo XIII expressed it: ". . . absolutely nothing of that great treasury of grace which the Lord brought us . . . is given to us except through Mary, for such is the will of God: so that just as no one can go to the Most High Father except through the Son, in much the same way, no one can come to Christ except through His Mother."<sup>33</sup> There

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<sup>29</sup> This teaching sheds fresh glory on the efficacy of the Passion of Christ, for it was not only more than enough to redeem countless worlds, but was even able to make a mere creature capable of co-operating in that Redemption. For all Mary's ability to merit was derived from His Passion.

<sup>30</sup> Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 42.768. Emphasis added.

<sup>31</sup> Pius XII, *Bendito seja*, May 13, 1946; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 38.266.

<sup>32</sup> Pius XII, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, October 11, 1954; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 46.635.

<sup>33</sup> Leo XIII, *Octobri mense*, September 22, 1891; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 24.196.

are no exceptions — even the graces, of the Sacraments, even infused contemplation and the choicest fruits of the Holy Spirit come through Mary. For was it not even true that on the first Pentecost, as our present Holy Father said: “She it was who, by her most mighty prayers, obtained that the Spirit of the Divine Redeemer, already given on the Cross, should be bestowed on the new-born Church . . . in the company of miraculous gifts.”<sup>34</sup>

We see, then, that Mary is inseparable from her divine Son. As Pope Pius XII said, she is “always sharing His lot” and “always most intimately united with her Son. . . .”<sup>35</sup> There is and always has been a “never dissociated manner of life and labors of the Son and the Mother.”<sup>36</sup> We might sum it all up in a brief word: Mary’s role, according to the will of God, is best described as *all-pervading*. She is *everywhere* in His dealings with us. She shared intimately in earning all graces, she shares equally in distributing every grace. Would it not, then, be an excellent means of conformity with the ways of God if we would give to her an equally all-pervading place in our own spiritual lives, by making and living a total consecration to her?<sup>37</sup>

It is obvious, then, that if one really lives out a life of total consecration to Mary, our Mother, our most glorious Queen, the inseparable associate of Christ in all His works, he will find therein a most powerful help toward carrying out the ideals set before us by St. John of the Cross. For he is thereby brought more fully under the powerful attractiveness of the perfect example of Mary’s virtues. He is led to hate, and to void himself of all that is disordered, by his attempt to “conform [his] whole life to her direction and her desires.”<sup>38</sup> His will is drawn gradually into complete con-

<sup>34</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943; *Acta Apost. Sedis*, 35.248.

<sup>35</sup> Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*. *Acta Apost. Sedis* 42.768 and *Mystici Corporis*. *Ibid.* 35.247.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. note 22 above.

<sup>37</sup> Although devotion to Mary grows in all souls as they grow spiritually (unless, of course, ignorance prevents it from increasing explicitly in which case it will increase *implicitly* inasmuch as they will love what God loves, and intend to observe the economy of salvation He has established) yet in some souls it will take a more explicit, constantly conscious, intimate form than in others. The more fully Marian forms are obviously objectively better, as being in closer conformity with the ways of God Himself. Yet there is a providential difference in spiritual attractions. Cf. St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, No. 152.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. note 8 above.



formity with Mary's will, which is ever in perfect unison with the will of God. Even his very manner of seeking to achieve conformity with the will of God by conformity with the will of Mary is particularly in accord with God's good pleasure, for, if one gives to Mary an all-pervading role in his spiritual life, he is thereby imitating the ways of God, who gives to Mary an all-pervading place in all His dealings with us. And if, in carrying out his total consecration, one goes so far as to give to Mary the right to dispose of all his spiritual treasures<sup>39</sup>—and a really total consecration naturally implies this<sup>40</sup>—he is thereby imitating most closely the example of Christ the King, who makes His Queen and Mother His treasurer, without whom absolutely no grace is given to mankind. It is obvious, further, that in surrendering to Mary even the disposition of his dearest treasures, he is greatly aided in avoiding attachments which, as St. John of the Cross points out so well, can lurk in even the holiest things. Finally, the soul is aided to accomplish these things not only by the inherent tendency of the consecration to promote detachment and conformity to the will of God: for Mary, our Queen and Mother, the all-powerful Mediatrix of all graces, while she cares lovingly for all her children, has a still greater, most special love and assistance for those who joyfully give themselves totally into her hands.

It is easy to see, then, how true are the words of St. Pius X:

For who does not know that there is no more certain and easy way than Mary to unite all with Christ, and to attain through Him the perfect adoption of sons that we may be holy and immaculate in the sight of God?<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This is done only insofar as they are by nature capable of being disposed. The impetratory and satisfactory value of prayer and good works is alienable. So is congruous merit. Condign merit is not.

<sup>40</sup> This feature is stressed in the very formula of consecration by St. Louis de Montfort. On this element in the consecration of Father Chaminade, cf. E. Neubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52, 145-146.

<sup>41</sup> St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 36.451.

# Mary All Beautiful

*Sister Mary Annice, C.S.C.*

## *Introduction*

THE psalmist has written countless times expressions applicable to the beauty of the Blessed Mother of God. Throughout the Little Office of the Blessed Mother many "gems" of antiphons shine out and illuminate the narrative Psalms at regular intervals. "Thou art beautiful and sweet in thy delights, O holy Mother of God," and "I am dark but beautiful, O daughter of Jerusalem; therefore has the King loved me and led me into His own chamber."<sup>1</sup> And again in the antiphon of Lauds for the Pentecostal season we find, "Thou art beautiful and fair, O daughter of Jerusalem, as majestic as an army in battle array."

What is there about true beauty that holds throngs of people in wrapt admiration? The ability of a beautiful object to refresh and bring joy to the spirit of the beholder seems to depend upon the power within the thing of beauty to hold the gaze until a certain vision, often called an intuition, has been "caught." We may say that in this imitative "fragment," something of total Beauty Itself is manifested to man. We are brought, as it were, to a momentary joy and refreshment in these precious little reflections of infinite Reality and total Beauty. These myriads of "samples" of beauty though somehow touching us are at the same time very remote from us, for there is something mysterious and untouchable about real beauty. And it is only by a detached consideration and moving reverence that we can find the joy that the truly beautiful produces. Loving to have a beautiful thing present is not based on the motive of possessing it appetitively, as is the case in the pursu-

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<sup>1</sup> Ant. Vespers after Pentecost.

ance of a good thing. Its presence is sought simply that it may be beheld and enjoyed.

### *Objective Beauty*

But what do we mean when we say that someone or something is beautiful? Before we consider the particular and unique beauty of the Blessed Mother, it might be well to treat briefly of the theory of beauty, since it is one of the most elusive and controversial of the transcendentals.

Primarily we know the truth of things, love the good in them, and enjoy their beauty. Actually we appreciate — literally set a price on — the thing of beauty. We are pleased with and should derive a certain joy from contact with beautiful things. In such an experience many human faculties co-operate. Sight and hearing seem to be most on the alert for catching beauty in the world open to our senses. Yet this does not mean that other senses do not share in the whole experience.

The traditional definition of beauty is, "that which when seen pleases." This has within it two simple words which, if taken superficially, do very little to describe a truly beautiful object. On the other hand, to attempt to expound all of the profound implications of what it means to see physically with the eyes, grasp with the intellect in an immaterial way, and in a supernatural way, see through the "eyes of faith" would require a whole volume. The same is true for the term "pleases." For some things please the senses, others delight the imagination, while others considered by the intellect bring joy and satisfaction. And there are also those truths which perceived under the enlightening principle of faith, can thrill one to the point of ecstatic joy. Yet without attempting to go into all of the artistic and philosophic implications of these two words everyone should have a good working idea of their import in the definition of beauty.

There are three intrinsic attributes which objectively characterize a thing of beauty, viz., integrity, harmony or proportion, and clarity or splendor of form. These do not differ entitatively from, but are involved in, the unity and order of the whole being. Integrity which connotes completeness or perfection is found on different planes or levels according to the various natures of things. Physical



beauty always requires the totality of integral parts. And the quality of integrity also applies to a person who lacks none of his existential perfections as man. But beyond this, virtues and the acts of virtue should add an operational perfection to a man so that he may have the fullness of integrity of personality which constitutes true human beauty. Proportion, or harmony, also has degrees of modification in its subjects, the lowest of which is in the physical order. In every proportion there must be at least two terms with a unifying principle underlying them. Thus plurality and order are to be found in every proportion and each creature realizes this condition according to its nature. In man there is a harmony which is proper to him as a human being, on the level of his freedom and intelligence. And it is virtue which insures this harmony between man's rational nature and his actions. Thus, temperance accomplishes harmony by restraining the inordinate activities of the lower appetites, and charity by ordering man in both his physical and spiritual activities back to God.

There is also a harmony required for the complete beauty of the social order. In every society there should exist the harmonious relationships of *concordiae* or mutual understanding in thought, friendships or harmony of affections, and fellowships or harmony of extrinsic activities. The element of beauty called clarity has been referred to by St. Thomas as splendor of form.<sup>2</sup> On the physical plane we associate clarity with color and light. But it is intrinsically related to the natural forms of beings. And there is an ascending gradation extending from the lower forms, such as minerals, up to the resplendent forms of angels. Dionysius, writing in the fourth century, asserts that God through love of His own absolute beauty wishes to multiply it and thus communicates some likeness of it to creatures. In describing this communication, Dionysius says that God causes this splendor in forms by transmitting a certain "lightninglike brightness" to them.<sup>3</sup> This is a more difficult lucidity or brightness to experience and grasp than physical light. Undoubtedly it pertains to that form which makes the natures of all things intelligible to man. And it is surely this

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<sup>2</sup> *S. Th.*, I-II, 27, a. 1, ad. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *De. Div. Nom.*, IV, 5.

quality which causes St. Augustine to declare that all things are but the reflections of the "Fount of Light."

### *Subjective Beauty — The Experience of Beauty*

The discovery and appreciation of beauty should be a happy experience. In fact, it should serve as a sort of "toner" which gives zest to ordinary workaday living. The happiest people, those with a kind of hidden clue to joy, seem to find the wonderful, the appreciable, the beautiful, in what others look upon as commonplace. Those who discover beauty easily and appreciate it have a kind of simple gaze which ferrets out treasures that send ripples of joy through their souls unperceived and undreamed by people of sluggish imaginations, insensitive emotions, or egotistical minds. For these are three groups of woefully circumscribed people, to whom a vast wealth of esthetic wonders is almost totally lost. Such a one doesn't seem to have the slightest idea of what it means to "catch" a little bit of beauty here, there, and everywhere and rest in it.

In every experience with beauty there is some rest or refreshment and there should also be an elevation of spirit as a result of this momentary joy and rest. Now, it is not at all easy to understand, much less to discuss, how beauty is apprehended — one might say "caught." Knowledge of beauty seems to be apprehended in some special way which is usually called intuitive. Certainly it is not acquired through the syllogistic reasoning process that the knowledge of demonstrable truth is. Yet knowledge of the beautiful is *true* knowledge. But there is also an emotional element included, since joy and rest accompany it. We must realize that there are as many different ways of experiencing, knowing, and appreciating, as there are levels or classes of objects presented esthetically to our senses, imaginations, and intellects. St. Thomas has said that our senses delight in things duly proportioned to them, i.e., on their own level.<sup>4</sup> For they are powers of knowing, and give us our firsthand knowledge of all of the things around us. Another simple principle on beauty pronounced by St. Thomas is: "Unless we are moved by and take delight in a work of art we shall never appreciate it"<sup>5</sup> (consider it beautiful). When we delight in and

<sup>4</sup> I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>5</sup> I-II, q. 27, a. 4.

find refreshment in the beautiful, we desire to keep it present by reproducing it. The products of imitative arts are based on this desire for the presence of the beautiful. Yet this is not to be identified with the movement of love which seeks the good to possess it.

To behold a thing truly on any level we must give some attention to it and consider it. For whether a thing is known mediately through discursive reasoning or immediately through sense knowledge, we have to center on and consider the object. Now the word "consider" derives from the Latin root *sideris*, meaning a "constellation of stars." One of the most ancient definitions of "consider" was "to observe the stars." And strangely too, the word "contemplation" derives from the Latin *templum*. Among the ancient pagan Romans the *templum* was a space in the temple, marked out by the augur, for observing the heavens. Can these facts have any possible connection with our study of beauty? Decidedly yes. Nothing will delight and provide refreshment for either our senses or higher powers unless it can in some way elevate them and take us out beyond self. This may sound overidealistic but, in truth, it is strictly realistic. For it is within the power of all real being with its goodness, truth, and beauty to draw our powers toward it, that we may ultimately learn more about it and love it. It is thus that we are finally drawn to rest in the absolute Goodness, Truth, and Beauty of which all of these things are but faint imitations. Now God created some beings more beautiful than others. He made the beautiful soul of Mary especially for Himself. Her special vocation was to be the totally beautiful tabernacle of the living God.

### *The Beauty of Mary*

Unquestionably the beauty of all the saints springs from their holiness, a participation in the holiness of God. Spiritual integrity and order necessarily characterize the beautiful soul. Neither the soul nor its actions can be perfect if there remains in it any disorder. We can have no doubt about our Blessed Mother's complete perfection and holiness, since we have from revelation the words of the Archangel Gabriel pronouncing Mary "full of grace." The Church in explaining the necessary implication of this passage, has



declared that the Blessed Virgin Mary was, in view of her Divine Motherhood, entirely preserved from the stain of original sin. The Blessed Mother's triumph over Satan — "crushing his head" — is also a basic part of the dogmatic pronouncement of the Immaculate Conception.

In attempting to explain, in a general way, Mary all beautiful, we may do well to consider first the state of her soul which made it capable of being totally beautiful. For we must realize that the soul of this maiden of Nazareth who was destined to bear God's own Son would have to be a soul made ready for this great vocation. Surely, no one supposes that any very good girl could, by gifts of nature and human efforts, render herself so lovely and beautiful — a kind of moral paragon, awaiting God's choice of her. Only God, Himself, could and did endow a human being with the unique privileges and graces of our Blessed Mother. There were, then, special graces adorning the soul of Mary which made her worthy of entering into the mystery of the hypostatic union and receiving the God incarnate into her holy womb. We have said that true beauty holds the gaze, and rests and refreshes the one beholding it. Certainly, God in preparing his own resting place on earth, the beautiful Mary upon which He would gaze for nine months, did this in an infinite way. There are no halfway measures with God. He fashioned from the beginning a perfect human being and Mother, upon whom her children would never tire of gazing, and who forever afterward would be known as "cause of our joy." When we meet with the beauty of Mary we experience something like an infinity of continuous aspects of her perfections. These, of course, are consequent upon her fullness of grace and completeness of perfection. This phase of our Blessed Mother's life we have considered in another article.<sup>6</sup> It is her fullness of virtue and consequent beauty of action that we now wish to emphasize.

The first virtue surely essential in the preparation of Mary as God's tabernacle was her profound humility. This virtue which grants to God His rightful place in one's life, makes room for God and His love by removing inordinate self-love. It, as it were, lays the very foundation for charity, the queen of all virtues. Pride, its opposite, sets a creature up in God's place and claims for self the

<sup>6</sup> *Review for Relig.*, May, 1958, "How Well Do We Know Our Mother?"

praise and excellence which belong strictly to God. Just as humility is somehow the *sine qua non* condition for the development of all virtues, pride is the origin of all sin. It was pride which brought about the downfall of Lucifer and his rebellious angels as well as the fall of our first parents. And this deep-rooted vice seems to be the most dominating and difficult to overcome in every child of Adam.

Whereas humility is founded on truth, pride rests on falsity. Lucifer who is pride personified is called "the father of lies." The lie of all lies, denies God, who is all Being and created all things, His rightful place in His own universe. It endeavors to usurp the Creator's place for a mere creature. Is it any wonder that God resists the proud? Christ showed this so openly in pardoning practically every type of sinner who came to Him repentant and humbled, and denouncing publicly the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees.

As the perfect example of humility we behold Mary hearing God's plan from His direct messenger, and immediately granting God His proper place. She declares herself at the disposal of His holy will, "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word." In Mary's perfect humility is found the requisite condition for her perfect love. For the very essence of holiness is union with God — in fact, this final union in eternity constitutes the ultimate end of every man's existence. Union is the primary effect as well as the end of all true love. Now a pure love of God requires the emptying of self — the removal of selfish love from the soul. Humility, which is a form of truth, is not found where the falseness of pride is.

But it must not be supposed that when natural pride and undue self-love are removed a sort of vacuum remains. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Blessed Mother is undoubtedly the best example of the immeasurable fullness of perfection consequent upon the lack of selfishness and pride. Accepting the dogma of the Church, that the soul of our Lady was immaculate from the first instant of her conception, it also follows that she was full of grace, i.e., she lacked none of the grace for her state. We may then believe that her soul has ever been full of that truth which is perfect self-knowledge. Humility at this level is also an attitude of will to accept all things as they *are*, and submit to reality. Nothing

is missed and nothing deceives — though we do not here maintain that Mary's gaze could be the omniscient one of her divine Son. Hers is that pure heart which, as à Kempis says, "penetrates heaven and hell." Such a one recognizes immediately all forms of good and evil, and this because she is so open to all truth and so teachable.

Now, any human being having fallen under the stain of actual sin as well as original sin should have no trouble in attributing to himself sins and imperfection. It is according to this truth that even great saints, without pretending or fabricating, deplored their own wickedness. There are, of course, some Christians who say that they find this somewhat contradicting. But let us realize the simple fact that of and by ourselves we possess the capacity for evil — not for good. It is literally true that of ourselves we can *do* nothing of any good. Nay, what is worse, our actions in failing to perform the good often result in sin. We must also recall, at the same time, that God has wondrously endowed us with His grace which makes us partakers of the divine nature. Thus we come to a true and proper esteem of our own nature but it is a humble esteem based upon God's goodness and power.

But Mary's humility was not based on beholding herself under the law of Adam's sin. Neither could it rest upon the recognition of poor use of powers and graces. It was infinitely beyond either of these and based upon that great truth of God's real relationship with Mary. This, we must realize, was strictly unique and different from any other relationship ever found in this world. In being placed by God in the plan of the hypostatic union, she became a part of this great mystery.

After the Archangel's visit and explanation to her, Mary then knew the complete truth of God's having chosen her, fashioned her, and placed her next to the Holy Trinity in greatness. From the first instant of her creation God loved her infinitely, for He loved Himself in her. Thus, could our Blessed Mother ecstatically sing her *Magnificat* and understand and mean every word of it. For it was God's truth announced through the words of His own handmaiden:

He that is mighty hath done great things to me.

He hath cast down the mighty and exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.



The rich in worldly goods and fame who are full of themselves and know nothing of true poverty of spirit are indeed empty. Of such the kingdom of heaven is *not!*

Thus, we behold with true and lasting joy the little maiden of Nazareth — the most beautiful woman ever created. We may well believe that her external features and figure were faultless. All of those who have beheld her in apparition — Bernadette, the little children of Fatima, and Juan Diego — have testified to her unusual beauty. But the spectacle which held and delighted the gaze of the God-Man and forever continues to please Him is “the glory within the King’s Daughter.” So, it seems well to consider now some of the objective criteria of beauty applied to the beauty of Mary.

Reference to the objective characteristics of beauty of personality was made above where we spoke of the harmony accomplished through the union of virtues with actions and we also mentioned the perfection of operation which is required for integrity of personality. There can surely be no doubt about the full perfection of moral harmony in Mary. Neither could anyone deny her complete integrity of person, for her spotless purity of soul and body and her fullness of grace insures this. Regarding clarity or “light,” St. Augustine and St. Thomas both refer this quality of beauty to the forms of things.<sup>7</sup> Surely no degree of that quality which makes a soul more resemble its Creator would be lacking in God’s own Mother.

But there is also the “light” of grace to be considered when referring to beauty of soul. Now, neither angels nor any human beings have divine natures. But all by reason of their spiritual forms can mysteriously participate in the divine nature. Grace, the free gift of God’s created love to man, is an endowment which renders man more holy and pleasing to God. This is indeed a kind of sharing in the divine nature which is subsistent “Light and Love.” For want of a better descriptive word for such a mysterious quality, the Church has from the beginning made use of the word “light” of grace. The Second Person of the Trinity who is the Word and expression of Divine Wisdom is called the Way and Light. The Fathers of the Church as well as some of the

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<sup>7</sup> I-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3.

saints who received mystic graces use the symbol of light very frequently to explain grace. The supreme and most mysterious of the attributes of beauty — spiritual beauty — is then the splendor of sanctifying grace. By the grace of her Immaculate Conception Mary received a kind of “infinitude” of this splendor, that is, when compared with other creatures — not with the Fount of Light Itself. So we may say that Mary’s beauty, which is actually the result or effect of her fullness of grace, but manifested in her virtues and consequent works, is a beauty surpassing all of God’s creatures including even the splendor of the angels.

We must not think of the Blessed Mother’s fullness of grace and perfection as something absolute and unchanging like the infinite and immutable perfection of God. The greatness of Mary’s grace and the absence of any imperfection at her conception and birth did not exclude an increase of grace throughout her life. We are too much accustomed to thinking about grace in a kind of negative way, that is, as a prevention for sin or something which will remove temptation. In our Lady’s life her graces were entirely relative to the mission for which God created her. For example, she received different graces at the time of her Son’s incarnation and birth than at the time of His passion and death. Her graces *were* actually the mysterious preparation for every phase of her Divine Motherhood. We must also realize that with the increase of grace, depending as it does in a great measure upon the love of God in a soul, there has never been a soul surpassing God’s own Mother in love. Of this Father William G. Most says, “. . . Recall that among the principles regulating the growth in grace of any person one of the most important is this: The increase we obtain depends not so much on the greatness of the things we do as on the fervor of love with which we do them. Now since Mary’s grace increased in proportion to the grace she already had, on that ground alone the increase is staggering to imagine. Add to this the fact that all her actions were performed with the maximum love and generosity and it becomes impossible for us to imagine how great her grace became.”<sup>8</sup>

Full of charity may then be said of Mary as well as “full of grace.” We have said that the Blessed Virgin was all humble, for

<sup>8</sup> *Mary in Our Life*, (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1955), p. 15.

this is the essential condition for such charity as hers. But we seem to catch "sight" of her dazzling beauty as we know more and more about her maternal charity. That boundless love which filled the soul of Mary after the incarnation, birth, life, passion, and death of her divine Son is, to our limited minds, not strictly comprehensible. Concerning this grace Pope Pius IX has said in defining the Immaculate Conception: "None greater under God can be thought of, and no one except God can comprehend it."

This does not mean, of course, that we are not to endeavor to know more and more about our Mother in all of her magnificent perfections and beauty. For it is in knowing, at least partially, the great mysteries of our faith that our love for God is fed and gradually grows stronger. After all, a mystery is not defined as "a truth which we *cannot* understand," but rather, "one which we cannot *fully* understand." So it is with knowledge about the great mysteries surrounding the whole life of God's Mother. They are outlined for us in a simple chart of fifteen events known as the mysteries of the Rosary. Everyone from the little child entering school to the octogenarian can, in some way, picture these events in his imagination. Their penetration and understanding depends on a number of factors such as graces received, the degree of prayer reached, the love with which Mary is sought, etc. But in any case, in normal spirituality new knowledge should lead to new love of our Lady. And it is thus that she becomes "cause of our joy," "singular vessel of devotion," and, above all, "refuge of sinners."

Now it is well for us to see ourselves often in the last role, sinners who need a refuge. And we should meditate often on the tender and merciful Mother who so dearly and sorrowfully purchased her children. I am afraid that we are prone to take for granted this boundless Mother love for the individual members of the Mystical Body. Of this St. Francis de Sales writes most movingly: "Now this maternal bosom being thus wounded with love, not only did not seek a cure for its wound, but loved her wound more than all cure, dearly keeping the shafts of sorrow she had received on account of the love which had shot them into her heart and continually desiring to die of them, since her Son had died of them."



Here again we must accept a positive attitude if we wish to understand Mary's perfection of love which is ultimately the beauty which crowns all of her virtues. Love urges to its end, that is, union. Suffering *is* love and love is suffering when losing self to unite with the Love which is infinite. The second great love of the Mother is the love of all her children for whom she bore the anguish of Christ's passion. These are the neighbors she loves as herself, for God. Such love is selfless and completely humble. Such true charity meets all the requirements of beauty as beholden to the very eye of God. Upon this sinless and beautiful soul alone could the Incarnate God gaze with pleasure and in her as His spotless tabernacle could He rest with true joy.

### Conclusion

Mary is like a pure glass through which God gazes at His world, at darkened humanity stained with sin. Mary could say of herself, "I am black (human) but (or nevertheless) beautiful." In this expressive paradox lies the key to the reason why her soul so pleases God and forever magnifies Him. "Nevertheless beautiful" pertains to the unique place of that soul, human to be sure, but unlike all other humans, *full* of grace and virtues. Therein, the Star of the Sea possesses a brightness exceeding that of all angels, and a purity and harmony so perfect as to rank next in beauty to that of Christ's risen Body.

But this is the vision for which we must wait until eternity begins for each one of us. For though we may think much about it and even speak of it, we realize that the vision of our heavenly Mother in glory will be granted to us only with the Beatific Vision itself. Now we firmly hope for our salvation and all of the means to obtain it. As Mediatrix of all graces to us and one of the greatest means to our sanctification, we depend upon and pray very often to Mary. Even now we experience joy when we think of sharing in the Beatific Vision which includes also Mary's beatitude. Only then will we actually know how wondrously beautiful is the Mother of God!

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## Spirituality and the Lay Community

*Ed Willock*

IT HAS always been a humiliating experience for me, that I find myself periodically compelled to take issue with people who obviously are my betters. The things with which I most violently disagree inevitably turn up in the Catholic press under bylines of a highly respectable nature. I have never explained this strange compulsion to my own satisfaction. All I can say in my own defense is that it would give me far greater pleasure to differ with (say) Khrushchev, Paul Blanshard, Nasser, or Margaret Sanger, but somehow the words of these people fail to arouse my ire as much as the words of people who indisputably are better people than I am. (The four people I mentioned may be better than I am, but at this point, with what little knowledge I have, I regard such a point as being debatable. Of course, my comparison is of ideas not morals.)

Currently I feel compelled to differ with John Cort as regards his article on "Community," as it appeared in *SPIRITUAL LIFE* of last September. For similar reasons I must differ with the Carthusian, Dom Verner Moore, as regards quotes taken from his book *The Life of God with Man* and reprinted under the heading "The Cloister of the Home" in last December's issue of *Act*, the publication of the Christian Family Movement. I feel that both of these wise and good men have taken a position contrary to the best good of the lay apostolate, especially the family apostolate, by placing their emphasis on the wrong things.

To deal first with my friend John Cort: his thesis (with which I agree) was that Christian community is desperately needed because man is a social being and therefore must try to realize the Christ-life on earth in community terms rather than in a merely private and interior disposition. Then Mr. Cort goes on to show how badly the attempts at community have worked out. His example is the attempt of the *Catholic Worker* both in theory and in the field over a period of 22 years. I submit that all the clinical evidence that John could amass would be inadequate to prove that a thing so desperately needed as a Christian community *cannot be done*. For men to make a community among people bred in individualism is a three-stage project: the planning stage, the societal or organizational stage, and finally the community stage. Since we have no statistics with which to work, I am forced to make an educated guess about how long such a project would take to mature. My guess would be, a minimum of 120 years. Now, this guess applies to Catholic social action, whatever form it may take. I submit that no drastic social reform can be expected to achieve its full maturity *within a single generation*. All those who criticize the failures of Catholic social action are being premature unless their research has covered a period of several generations. I feel certain that Christian community, as a notion, must become an hereditary factor before it becomes a fact.

As long as people are self-conscious about their being in community (I speak of laymen) the community *does not yet exist*. Community, of its nature is not self-conscious. Passing through the planning and organizational stage is bound to take a long time. The question I felt obliged to ask myself is this: Are we not destroying the whole program of Catholic Action by insisting upon seeing an accomplished fact possibly a century before any harvest can be expected? (Of course, the invaluable off-product of this attempt at social reform is the souls that are saved and sanctified in the process. We are in no position to estimate this harvest which is continuously being reaped.)

My point is that an effort toward achieving Christian community is justified in itself without reference to transitional successes or failures. In the light of the social encyclicals and the New Testament *vis-à-vis* the twentieth century, I cannot see how a Christian



in the world can meet his responsibilities without striving with his fellow members in Christ to achieve some sort of Christian community.

To take my thesis out of the realm of guesswork and speculation, let's turn to the Labor Movement which in Cort's eyes has been one program that offers the occasion for welding men together in Christ. (Here again I agree with John.) Do not the things that are currently admirable in Labor Unionism presuppose and spring from the apostolic efforts of such men of the nineteenth century as Windthorst, Bishop von Ketteler, Ozanam, and Pope Leo XIII? Would it not have been regrettable had this nineteenth-century work been negated by critics who damned it prematurely for ineffectiveness. The good that there is in European Christian democracy (it has been the *one* hopeful alternative and competitor to Marxist Communism) has been almost a century in the making. From the point of view of social action, the place where the Marxist has had it over us was that he was prepared to die in failure in the hope of ultimate success. We are too busy looking for results in the nursery!

Which brings me to the point where I differ most strongly with John Cort and Father Verner Moore. It is this: I think we suffer greatly in our social efforts for failing to see that (in a sense) the lay community is almost the opposite to the monastic community. The traditional monastic means are a *withdrawal* from things, whereas the family (and thence the community) uses as its means the proper *use* of things. Monastic life begins with a withdrawal from the world, whereas family (and community) life begins with the act of taking a mate. Just as the monk must deal with the ever present poverty, celibacy, and obedience, the married people must deal with property, family, and town government. Cort speaks of the impossible kind of heroics needed in a lay community and then he proceeds to take heroics proper to either a monastery or a back-to-the-land movement, as though these particular heroics were proper to family life. I see no reason at all why either monasticism or neo-agrarianism are essential or even relevant to a lay community. Just as one could ruin a monastery by injecting private property, wives and children, and democratic self-government, so also one could ruin a lay community by introducing monas-

tic practices. Cort claims that lay-community efforts have failed by setting up heroics too difficult to live with. My point is that the heroics proposed in too many cases are redundancies added to the normal heroics of family life. It's tough enough to raise five kids without arbitrarily adding to that the necessity of community prayer.

We have to face the simple fact that one man's meat is another man's poison, or, more aptly, one man's occasion for sin is another man's occasion for perfection. The monastic atmosphere (unless drastically modified) is poison to a lay community. I have seen several families ruined by one spouse or the other making the mistake of presuming that the ideal Christian is either a monk or nun. The virtue of a married person is always intimately related to his (or her) being tightly bound up with persons and things. The opposite (in a sense) is true of the monastic inmate.

In my experiences, one thing usually overlooked by laymen when attempting to set up a Christian community is the machinery of government and the necessity of each member family sacrificing some of its sovereignty. These two things would be obvious problems were it not for the ever present scepter of monasticism. Monks don't have to worry about such things, nor do priests; therefore these are not Christian matters. (So the thinking, or lack of thinking, goes.)

The zealous laymen, following the monastic pillar of fire, hope (irrationally) for some sort of abbot whom everyone will obey and a Rule by which everyone will live. Here is an absolute guarantee of discord and bitterness. Married people are not monks; more, it is un-Christian for them to behave as though they were. If they continuously hope for an abbot or a RULE, they will fail to draw up a constitution and decide upon a process of discussion, voting, and legislating. Worse than this technical inadequacy, the monastic standard will probably cause them to do another thing that will destroy community: look upon goodness as being within the domestic walls, whereas outside lies "*the world*." Thus the community remains an alien thing threatening the cloister of the family. How in heaven can a Christian community come into being if one fosters the notion of the home as being a cloister? Community must represent a desirable, holy good before it possibly can become

a Christian community. Since a community is a sort of confederation of families, the health of the community (as with any confederation) depends upon each family sacrificing some of its sovereignty. Where the family is absolutely sovereign (as is usual today) community is impossible.

At this point may I again reprint Father Moore's words as they were reprinted in last December's *Act*: writes Father Moore, "Monastic cloister brings about a permanent isolation of the soul *from all that is not God*" (italics are mine). "The cloister of the home absorbs the interest and the activities of the parents to such an extent that they no longer desire to indulge in anything that interferes with the life of the home." He goes on from there amplifying the same theme: "The Cloister of the Home." Now, I am sure that many married folk will lap this idea up as being sheer, unadulterated spirituality. It may be (from a monk's point of view), but to me, I regard such a notion as being highly destructive of any attempt at lay community.

In order for individuals or individual families to strive courageously to achieve community, they must first expect that there is a good in community which justifies the effort. If the area outside the home is regarded as alien, Godless, or antithetical to the family, then it follows that family dimensions represent the largest social area in which Christianity can be realized. I will concede at this point that Father Moore's analogy does make sense for any family existing in a community, over the mores of which they can exercise no influence. But a family entrenched behind its own walls is a family in an extremely truncated position, because, as an imperfect society, the family *needs* the community in which to realize its potential. A family needs neighbors with whom to exchange love and services, with whom to seek common goods, from whom to get spouses for its marrying children. The need of community is a natural need of the conjugal group, due to its own native inadequacy.

To put this need in the most spiritual terms, I would say that if love of neighbor is meant to be an habitual thing (and I believe this is Christian doctrine) it then follows that families should not wait until neighbors are in extreme need before acting, but that an organized community of daily concern should exist, in which



a more or less effective mutual charity and understanding is practiced.

To return for the last time to John Cort's article: he implies that the search for community should become a making of a model parish rather than just setting up new groups. At first this idea sounds good because undoubtedly the parish church with the entabernacled Christ is the necessary center of a community intended to be Christ-centered. There is one hitch, however, and to make this point I must refer back to my previous mention of modes of community government. In my experiences, wherever there are laity and a priest, the priest is given the reins, by common consent. The deep reason for this is because each priest is a link in a chain of command, and thus equipped and ready to exercise leadership. We laity, on the other hand, generally know little about group government and are reluctant to take up leadership responsibilities. However, the problems of a lay community may be matters with which a priest has had no experience. (For example in the community of which I am a member, some of our problems have been house building, road building, parliamentary procedure, and child care — all of which are lay-community problems for which a priest *as priest* has no particular training.) In the midst of these lay-community problems, if a priest is present at debates and conferences about procedural matters, almost inevitably some layman tries to win clerical prestige on the side he is advocating. You can't imagine how self-righteous a man can be about his position on (say) using a cement slab rather than cellars for houses, *if he can get a priest on his side*.

A continuous problem forever latent in an organization of the laity is the manner of self-government. As long as there is a priest participant, this problem will never be faced, and the laity will never gain the group confidence that they need in order to exercise group influence upon society.

I agree with Father DeLubac, S.J., when he says that the presentation of a doctrine is not always done best by refuting adverse positions. Differing with John Cort and Father Moore has by no means provided me with opportunities to develop the ideas of community implicit in the Christian message.

I believe, in regard to this matter, that the layman must recognize,

respect, and properly use those things that are the stuff of his vocation. By lay community, I mean a community of families. The purpose of such a community would have to be consonant with the purposes of marriage. This fact immediately shows us that a lay community will be interested in houses (whether building them as my group did or maintaining them as most families must). Such a community will necessarily be interested in children, adequate play space, and a friendly atmosphere for them. Activities that have to do with income and repairs are also common problems for all families. In other words the normal common needs of families become the stuff of lay community. There is no need to bring in undiluted monasticism to find a *raison d'être*.

At this point you may say: "But where's the spirituality?" More than likely you mean, "Where's the monasticism?" such as group prayer, extraordinary asceticism, and new forms of worship. The spirituality must lie in accepting and being THE KIND of person your vocation demands. The prayer life of such a community must spring from its particular needs without reference to whether this prayer life duplicates or imitates that of a monastery.

One final idea, and I think this answers the basic problem. Among the primary purposes of a lay Christian community would be the encouragement of neighborliness (a correspondence with one of the two great Commandments).

Our mistake has been to presume that people who are reputedly unneighborly are that way by choice. In some cases (conceivably) that is probably true. But there is a reason why good-neighbor relations fail to exist among people who want to be neighborly. The reason is this: the circumstances of life are such that a person is constantly being asked to show special preference to one person or group rather than another. In these numerous cases, the individual loses the affection of the person or group because of his conscientious preference for the other. If you think about this, I'm sure you will agree that this is common. Normally, a person has a number of allegiances, with only a limited amount of energy and wealth to expend. He is forced to choose between one or the other. If he takes care of one, he runs the risk of neglecting the other. Life is full of these kinds of decisions. So a principle must be found to guide his generosity. Mere affection won't suffice.

He may have to attend to his wife at the expense (in their minds) of the children. He may have to attend to Uncle Ned, at the expense of neglecting Aunt Harriet. He may have to attend Union meetings at the expense of being at home with his family. You can see that these kinds of choices are endless. Now, each choice might be motivated by charity, but those who are *not* its object may see it only as neglect or indifference. In this way, what is intended as neighborliness, often has the appearance of viciousness.

A solution to this common dilemma (at least for one's peace of mind) has to be found. Fortunately, there is a solution, and it is a notion basic to Catholic Action. First, a person must accept the proposition that *a concern for the common good of all, is a higher and more sacred concern than for any private good*. After this proposition is intellectually accepted, then a person must act accordingly, and learn to regard the common good as a sacred thing close to Christ. When this is done, and in this spirit, a person will come to expect and accept the fact that his generosity will hurt those who are not its immediate beneficiaries. The ire he may provoke by his choices of how to spend his energy, wealth, and time is something he must learn to accept. He can't possibly do this unless he knows that God desires him to choose the higher good, regardless of whom it may hurt.

Those who do not immediately benefit from his choices will seldom understand why he (in their minds) neglected them, so he will get no confirmation of his decision from them. He must turn to God for strength and consolation. (I feel sure, for example, that Noah's family resented the troubles he put them through to build his ark, but his work meant the preservation of humanity.) I am not advocating neglect, mind you, but I know that pursuing whatever cause means neglect of others.

In today's world, we put so much virtue in the matter of caring for one's own family, that a person trying to serve a community good becomes a scandal to his own kinfolk.

Social justice is seriously retarded by those well-intentioned moralists who insist that a person's entire energies should be expended for the good of one's own kinfolk. The community good needs attention, and if it is not served, the private good of all of us will suffer.



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## Queen of Humility Street

*Mother Marie Vandenberg, R.C.*

THE old North American College in Rome has been immortalized by Father Martin Doherty as "The House on Humility Street" where he spent a brief but happy year preparing for the priesthood. His ups and downs as a seminarian, before ill health forced him to finish his training in the United States, make delightful reading even if you have never had the chance to throw pennies in the Trevi Fountain or tread the cobblestones of Rome.

The recently published history of the American College by Father Robert F. McNamara of Rochester, New York, tells in fascinating detail the story of the house at Number 30, Via dell' Umiltà. Out of the abundance of facts, figures, and personalities depicted by Father McNamara in his monumental work, there emerges the thread of what may be called a love story: the story of devotion to God's Mother under the title of "Our Lady of Humility."

Mary's humility was, of course, prepared from all eternity in the mind of God. It was what enabled her to be caught up by God as the prey of Divine Love from the first moment of her existence, never to withdraw herself from the grasp of the royal Eagle, surrendered beyond return. The Gospel's eloquent record of her words and deeds and the Gospel's even more eloquent silence combine to reveal to a meditative heart her profound sense of her creaturely dependence and her habitual prostration of soul in adoration of the Divine Majesty. Truly, humility is her name.

In sixteenth-century Rome, the beauty of Mary's humility captured the heart of a widowed noblewoman, Donna Francesca

Baglioni Orsini. It had long been her dream to establish a convent of cloistered women dedicated to our Lady under the title of her humility. Donna Francesca purchased an extensive property adjacent to the Piazza di Pilotta. After several delays, she succeeded in 1601 in laying the foundation stone of her cherished monastery, Santa Maria dell' Umiltà. The building was finished and the cloister canonically erected in 1613, enclosing a tiny community of Dominican nuns.

Though the religious of Our Lady of Humility were drawn from nobility of her own rank, Donna Francesca never became one of them. She was content to live in the convent without vows in a little room reserved for her near the chapel. Here she could make her devotions with the religious if she chose. May it be said to her honor that she was a true daughter of Mary's humility in that she never played the "great lady foundress and benefactor," as did some whom Teresa of Ávila unfortunately encountered. Donna Francesca's life of unostentatious charity and unobtrusive piety merited a rich reward when in 1626 at the age of 83 she went quietly to her grave, giving as little trouble to others in death as she had done during life. She was buried at first in the tiny convent church, later to be moved to the Sisters' graveyard.

Two years before her death, Donna Francesca's little chapel acquired a real treasure: an oil painting done on wood and covered with fine Venetian glass, a Madonna and Child attributed to Perugino. Here was an image of the Virgin worthy of the convent's title. With its frame of walnut and cypress and its artistic brass protecting doors, this valuable gift was enshrined in a side chapel and became the object of much veneration. It seemed that with this achievement, Our Lady of Humility had come into her own, and Donna Francesca Orsini had managed to live to see it.

The much prized portrait was presented to the monastery by the Marchesa Camilla Maccarani, mother of one of the first members of the community. Nor was this the end, for where Francesca Orsini left off, the Maccarani family went on. In 1641 the need for repairs to the chapel occasioned an opportunity for the Maccaranis to subsidize its enlarging and embellishment. A new shrine was made for the already well-known painting over the main altar; a bronze frame set in an oval of green porphyry, the

inevitable cherubs of the late Baroque period supporting it, a brazen dove as its crown. Here Our Lady of Humility was for more than one hundred years the center of devotion not only for the high-born nuns, whose fervent religious life won them a reputation for strict observance, but also for the local gentry. So much was this so that the street on which the convent faced gradually became known as the Via dell' Umiltà.

In 1796 the tranquil routine of the monastery's life was troubled by repercussions from the Napoleonic Wars; in 1810 its peace was abruptly shattered when, by edict of the French conqueror of the Papal States, religious houses were suppressed, their occupants turned out into the streets. When the homeless nuns of Santa Maria dell' Umiltà took refuge in other Dominican convents that somehow escaped confiscation, they must have taken Our Lady of Humility with them. At least she was gone from her shrine over the high altar when, in a more peaceful day, the Visitation nuns came to take up residence in the erstwhile Dominican cloister. Does the original Lady of Humility Street still exist, incognito, in some place of the Sisters' refuge? "Ah," the Romans would say to you, "*Chi lo sa?*" ("Who can tell?")

Lost though her portrait may be, the Church of St. Mary of Humility was still a popular center of piety under Visitandine ownership. Then in the autumn of 1848 history repeated itself. Revolutionary forces took control of Rome, commandeered convents, and evicted the nuns "with a nice inhumanity . . . on short notice, and at night." Once again a sad procession of homeless nuns left the house on Humility Street. This time, however, there was a new twist to the story, for the first time it was the French who caused the eviction; this time it was the French who came to the rescue. This did not mean, however, that St. Mary of Humility Convent could revert at once to religious purposes. Rome was to remain under martial law for some time to come, and barracks had to be found for the military forces. The monastery on the Via dell' Umiltà was designated to house the French soldiery. The Visitandines were never to return.

This was the state of affairs when in 1858 Archbishop Gaetano Bedini obtained the property for the establishment of a residence for students to the American priesthood. Bedini, former papal



nuncio to the United States and later prefect of the Congregation Propaganda Fide, conceived the idea of a pontifical college in Rome for North American seminarians. He had in mind a college in the European sense of the word: a residence hall, in this case for priestly candidates studying at the Gregorian or Urban Universities.

Pope Pius IX blessed Bedini's idea and with the rather reluctant assistance of the hard-pressed bishops of pioneer America, the project went forward. The former convent of Our Lady of Humility was purchased by the Pope for the Congregation Propaganda Fide so that it might be presented to the American bishops. The hierarchy of the United States would be responsible for maintaining and staffing it.

Under Archbishop Bedini the monastery was remodeled for use as a seminary. This energetic man took a personal interest in realizing an ambition which he felt would give dignity and recognition to the Catholic Church in America, as well as provide a truly Roman-minded clergy for the far-flung provinces of North America. As a manifestation of his paternal interest, Archbishop Bedini took steps to fill the empty niche over the main altar where the original Madonna dell' Umiltà had presided. He commissioned an artist to copy his favorite Lady picture, the miraculous portrait of Mary, Mother of Mercy, in the Church of Santa Chiara in Rimini. The second Lady of Humility is not an exact reproduction of the Madonna of Rimini, but has the same general posture. This new Virgin of Humility is represented with her eyes looking up to heaven, her hands resting with a gentle grace upon her bosom, holding in place the flowing folds of her mantle. Contrary to what one might expect in the personification of humility, here is no maiden with bowed head and downcast eyes; her gaze is directed serenely heavenward. Yet here is humility nonetheless. The Godward-looking Lady breathes forth a selflessness that speaks once more its "*Ecce ancilla Domini*," or in the quaint language of Juliana of Norwich, "Lo me, God's handmaid."

Archbishop Bedini was also responsible for placing upon a tall pillar in the courtyard of the college a statue of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States. Thus the heavenly Mother of America's future priests stood waiting to greet her

spiritual sons when on December 8, 1859, the North American College was officially opened. Here except for a span of four or five years during World War II, an otherwise unbroken series of young clerics lived and studied, prayed, worked, and took their recreation. Here priestly candidates from all over the United States, their black cassocks trimmed patriotically with red sash, white collar, and blue piping, absorbed the spirit of Roman Catholicism under the watchful eye of their Immaculate Mother, the Queen of Humility Street.

Presiding over all, Our Lady of Humility reigns in simple grandeur from her oval setting of burnished bronze and mottled green marble. For the priestly students of today as well as for the consecrated women of four centuries ago, the contemplation of Mary's humility supplies much food for thought. She is an ideal, an inspiration, a lesson, and a challenge.

For the high-born Dominican nuns the lovely, lowly Virgin must have been a reminder that true glory lies in being great, not in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God. Earthly rank and title these women certainly had. The annals of the convent bear witness to this fact. There is also silent testimony of it in the chapel. Several of the young women who entered the cloister made gifts to the chapel to commemorate their break with the world. These benefactions were customarily acknowledged by affixing the donor's coat of arms to the gift as a memorial. For example, the diminutive side chapel of the Crucifix identifies its donor by a shield bearing the single white column of the Colonna family whose count fought so valiantly at Lepanto in the cause of the Church and Pius V. Some silent Sister of his lineage found her way here to serve God and the Church in obscurity and prayer, learning our Lady's humility through valiant victories on the battlefield of the soul.

"Lo me, God's handmaid" is a sentiment that does not come easily to human nature. Even where the spirit is willing, the flesh is woefully weak. How many struggling souls brought their success or perhaps their failure here to their Mother, to refresh their spirits in the unfailing fountain of her love and understanding. We can learn much from her attitude of contemplative calm, her air of utter receptivity, receptivity to both the initiatives of

God and the importunities of men. She is self-possession in self-surrender. Humility is her name.

Humility: probably the most sought after and yet the most elusive of all the virtues. St. Thomas Aquinas relegates it to an insignificant position as one of the minor parts of the virtue of temperance, while in almost the same breath he extols it as the *sine qua non* for growth in holiness. It is full of apparent paradox, and necessarily so. We make a mistake if we think it requires only us to look down on ourselves. In this quiet painting our Lady teaches us the other half of the lesson. She tells us to forget ourselves and look up to God.

Following World War II and the brief rectorship of Msgr. Gerald Kealy of Chicago, the present rector of the North American College was appointed. He is Most Reverend Martin J. O'Connor.

On October 18, 1953, His Holiness Pope Pius XII presided at the magnificent ceremonies dedicating the new college. Two hundred students were ready to take up residence there. As His Holiness had pointed out earlier, these and "succeeding generations will continue, in greater measure and with more ample facilities, to enjoy the richest blessings stemming from a priesthood nourished in the Eternal City." The House on Humility Street is now being used by American priests pursuing graduate studies.

To forge a link between the rich heritage of the past and the rich promise of the future, Bishop O'Connor, a soft-spoken dynamo of organizational ability and consummate tact, has seen to it that Santa Maria dell' Umiltà retains her place of honor in the hearts of the seminarians. He caused an exact replica of her portrait to be placed near the entrance to the chapel of the new college. Medals struck in her image are the cherished keepsake of all who visit either the new or old location. Queen of Humility Street, she reigns on the Janiculum as well, still teaching wordlessly her lesson in humility.





Santa Maria dell' Umiltà . . .

OUR LADY OF HUMILITY

*Picture over the main altar, downstairs chapel,  
at the old North American College in Rome.*

## MARIAN SUNRISE

Slowly  
With the breaking of the day  
It dawned on me  
That Mary is the one  
Who lifts the sun  
So tenderly  
From out the slumb'ring shadows  
And the sleepy night  
Of its repose.

"And do you know," she whispered,  
"Why the sun,  
In rising,  
Blushes so?"

I answered: "No."

"It is the burning glow,"  
She said,  
"Of nature's tender feeling  
For her Queen;  
It is her morning masterpiece,  
Revealing  
By a faint reflection  
My undying love and deep affection  
For the universe  
And you."

O, Heart of Man!  
How much longer must She wait  
For you to penetrate  
Into this hidden secret  
Of the universe?  
Why can you not see  
The greatness of your destiny?  
It is your heart  
That God has made and set apart  
To be, in sheer perfection,  
The sublime reflection  
Of Her Heart,  
Which God, in turn, has set apart

To be the perfect mirror  
Of His Own.

O, cold and heartless heart of man!  
What tragedy has brought you  
To this awesome state  
Of unreflection  
Where you are outdone  
Even by the rising sun?  
Why can you too not reflect  
The warmth,  
The burning glow,  
The flame  
That is the Loving Heart  
Of Her  
Who rules with queenly grace  
And Sov'reign power  
Over the mountains  
And the seas,  
The flowers and trees,  
The insects, birds, and beasts,  
The stars,  
The moon,  
The sun,  
And EVERYTHING!

O, heart of man! Arise  
From out the lifeless tomb  
Of that atomic doom  
Which your poor mind  
Has fashioned  
For the universe  
Turn  
From hate and strife.  
Burn  
With love of Her  
Who is God's Masterpiece  
For man  
The Mother of Fair Love,  
The Queen and Mother of mankind.  
She is your LIFE,  
Your SWEETNESS  
And your ONLY HOPE!

REV. EUGENE CULLINANE

*This lecture presented at the Graduate College Forum of Princeton University is one of the controversial articles of M. Jacques Maritain of Princeton University rejected by Rev. Hugh Halton, O.P., because they "did not meet the academic standards of the Aquinas Foundation of Princeton." The editors of SPIRITUAL LIFE are convinced of the grave importance of this subject of "Human Fellowship"; i.e., "the friendship of charity . . . between believers of different religious denominations (as well as between believers and non-believers)."*

# Truth and Human Fellowship

Jacques Maritain

*Si fieri potest, quod ex vobis est, cum  
omnibus hominibus pacem habentes.*

St. Paul, Rom. 12:18.

## I

"O LIBERTY, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" Madame Roland said, mounting the scaffold. O Truth, it may be said, how often blind violence and oppression have been let loose in thy name in the course of history! "Zeal for truth," as Father Victor White puts it, "has too often been a cloak for the most evil and revolting of human passions."<sup>1</sup>

As a result, some people think that in order to set human existence free from these evil passions, and make men live in peace and pleasant quiet, the best way is to get rid of any zeal for truth or attachment to truth.

Thus it is that after the violence and cruelty of wars of religion, a period of skepticism usually occurs, as at the time of Montaigne and Charron.

Here we have only the swing of the pendulum moving from one extreme to another. Skepticism, moreover, may happen to hold those

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Father Victor White, O.P., "Religious Tolerance," *The Commonweal*, September 4, 1953.



who are not skeptical to be barbarous, childish, or subhuman, and it may happen to treat them as badly as the zealot treats the unbeliever. Then skepticism proves to be as intolerant as fanaticism — it becomes the fanaticism of doubt. This is a sign that skepticism is not the answer.

The answer is humility, together with faith in truth.

The problem of truth and human fellowship is important for democratic societies; it seems to me to be particularly important for this country, where men and women coming from a great diversity of national stocks and religious or philosophical creeds have to live together. If each one of them endeavored to impose his own convictions and the truth in which he believes on all his co-citizens, would not living together become impossible? That's obviously right. Well, it is easy, too easy, to go a step further, and to ask: if each one sticks to his own convictions, will not each one endeavor to impose his own convictions on all others? So that, as a result, living together will become impossible if any citizen whatever sticks to his own convictions and believes in a given truth?

Thus it is not unusual to meet people who think that *not to believe in any truth*, or *not to adhere firmly to any assertion as unshakeably true in itself* is a primary condition required of democratic citizens in order to be tolerant of one another and to live in peace with one another. May I say that these people are in fact the most intolerant people, for if perchance they were to believe in something as unshakeably true, they would feel compelled, by the same stroke, to impose by force and coercion their own belief on their co-citizens. The only remedy they have found to get rid of their abiding tendency to fanaticism is to cut themselves off from truth. That's a suicidal method. And it is a suicidal conception of democracy: not only would a democratic society which lived on universal skepticism condemn itself to death by starvation; but it would also enter a process of self-annihilation, from the very fact that no democratic society can live without a common practical belief in those truths which are freedom, justice, law, and the other tenets of democracy; and that any belief in these things as objectively and unshakeably true, as well as in any other kind of truth, would be brought to nought by the pre-assumed law of universal skepticism.

In the field of political science, the opinion which I am criticizing was made into a theory — the so-called “relativistic justification of democracy” — by Hans Kelsen. It is very significant that in order to establish his philosophy of the temporal order and show that democracy implies ignorance of, or doubt about, any absolute truth, either religious or metaphysical, Kelsen has recourse to Pilate; so that, in refusing to distinguish the just from the unjust, and washing his hands, this dishonest judge thus become the lofty precursor of relativistic democracy. Kelsen quotes the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate — St. John, Chapter 18 — in which Jesus says: “To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,” and Pilate answers: “What is truth?” and then delivers Jesus over to the fury of the crowd. Because Pilate did not know what truth is, Kelsen concludes, he therefore called upon the people, and asked them to decide; and thus in a democratic society it is up to the people to decide, and mutual tolerance reigns, because nobody knows what truth is.

The truth of which Kelsen was speaking was religious and metaphysical truth — what they call “absolute truth,” as if any truth, insofar as it is true, were not absolute in its own sphere. As Miss Helen Silving puts it,<sup>2</sup> the burden of Kelsen’s argument is: “Whoever knows or claims to know absolute truth or absolute justice” — that is to say, *truth* or *justice* simply — “cannot be a democrat, because he cannot and is not expected to admit the possibility of a view different from his own, the *true* view. The metaphysician and the believer are bound to impose their eternal truth on other people, on the ignorant, and on the people without vision. Theirs is the holy crusade of the one who knows against the one who does not know or does not share in God’s grace. Only if we are aware of our ignorance of what is the *Good* may we call upon the people to decide.”

It is impossible to summarize more accurately a set of more barbarous and erroneous assumptions. If it were true that whoever knows or claims to know truth or justice cannot admit the possibility of a view different from his own, and is bound to impose his true view on other people by violence, then the rational animal would

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<sup>2</sup> Helen Silving, “The Conflict of Liberty and Equality,” *Iowa Law Review*, Spring, 1950.

be the most dangerous of beasts. In reality it is through rational means, that is, through persuasion, not through coercion, that the rational animal is bound by his very nature to try to induce his fellow men to share in what he knows or claims to know as true or just. And the metaphysician, because he trusts human reason, and the believer, because he trusts divine grace and knows that "a forced faith is a hypocrisy hateful to God and man," as Cardinal Manning put it, do not use holy war to make their "eternal truth" accessible to other people; they appeal to the inner freedom of other people by offering them either their demonstrations or the testimony of their love. And we do not call upon the people to decide because we are aware of our ignorance of what is the good, but because we know this truth and this good, that the people have a right to self-government.

It is, no doubt, easy to observe that in the history of mankind nothing goes to show that, from primitive times on, religious feeling or religious ideas have been particularly successful in pacifying men; religious differences seem rather to have fed and sharpened their conflicts. On the one hand truth always makes trouble, and those who bear witness to it are always persecuted: "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth; I came not to send peace, but the sword."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand — and this is the point we must face — those who know or claim to know truth happen sometimes to persecute others. I don't deny the fact; I say that this fact, like all other facts, needs to be understood. It only means that, given the weakness of our nature, the impact of the highest and most sacred things upon the coarseness of the human heart is liable to make these things, by accident, a prey to its passions, as long as it has not been purified by genuine love. It is nonsense to regard fanaticism as a fruit of religion. Fanaticism is a natural tendency rooted in our basic egotism and will to power. It seizes upon any noble feeling to live on it. The only remedy for religious fanaticism is the Gospel light and the progress of religious consciousness in faith itself and in that fraternal love which is the fruit of the human soul's union with God. For then man realizes the sacred transcendence of truth and of God. The more he grasps truth, through science, philosophy, or faith, the more he feels what

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<sup>3</sup> Mt. 10:34.



immensity remains to be grasped within this very truth. The more he knows God, either by reason or by faith, the more he understands that our concepts attain (through analogy) but do not circumscribe Him, and that His thoughts are not like our thoughts: for "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath become His counselor?"<sup>4</sup> The more strong and deep faith becomes, the more man kneels down, not before his own alleged ignorance of truth, but before the inscrutable mystery of divine truth, and before the hidden ways in which God goes to meet those who search Him.

To sum up, the real problem has to do with the human subject, endowed as he is with his rights in relation to his fellow men, and afflicted as he is by the vicious inclinations which derive from his will to power. On the one hand, the error of the absolutists who would like to impose truth by coercion comes from the fact that they shift their right feelings about the object from the object to the subject; and they think that just as error has no rights of its own and should be banished from the mind (through the means of the mind), so man when he is in error has no rights of his own and should be banished from human fellowship (through the means of human power).

On the other hand, the error of the theorists who make relativism, ignorance, and doubt a necessary condition for mutual tolerance comes from the fact that they shift their right feelings about the human subject — who must be respected even if he is in error — from the subject to the object; and thus they deprive man and the human intellect of the very act — adherence to the truth — in which consists both man's dignity and reason for living.

They begin, as we have seen apropos of Kelsen, with the supreme truths either of metaphysics or of faith. But science also deals with truth, though in science the discovery of a new truth supplants most often a previous theory which was hitherto considered true. Well, what will happen if human fanaticism takes hold of what it claims to be scientific truth at a given moment? Suffice it to look at the manner in which the Stalinist state imposed on scientists its own physical, biological, linguistic, or economic truth. Now, it is a little different: a certain amount of diversity among scientists is *commanded* in Russia, and the Russian state is endeavoring to

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<sup>4</sup> Isa. 40:13.

*manage* and *control* free discussion itself. Shall we then conclude that in order to escape state-science oppression or management, the only way is to give up science and scientific truth, and to take refuge in ignorance?

It is truth, not ignorance, which makes us humble, and gives us the sense of what remains unknown in our very knowledge. In one sense only is there wisdom in appealing to our ignorance: if we mean the ignorance of those who know, not the ignorance of those who are in the dark.

Be it a question of science, metaphysics, or religion, the man who says: "What is truth?" as Pilate did, is not a tolerant man, but a betrayer of the human race. There is real and genuine tolerance only when a man is firmly and absolutely convinced of a truth, or of what he holds to be a truth, and when he at the same time recognizes the right of those who deny this truth to exist, and to contradict him, and to speak their own mind, not because they are free from truth but because they seek truth in their own way, and because he respects in them human nature and human dignity and those very resources and living springs of the intellect and of conscience which make them potentially capable of attaining the truth he loves, if some day they happen to see it.

## II

A particular application of the problem we are discussing can be found in the philosophical field. Some years ago I was asked whether in my opinion philosophers can co-operate.

I felt rather embarrassed, for on the one hand if philosophy is not search for truth it is nothing, and truth admits of no compromise; on the other hand if philosophers, that is, lovers of wisdom, cannot co-operate, how will any human co-operation be possible? The fact that philosophical discussions seem to consist of deaf men's quarrels is not reassuring for civilization.

My answer was that philosophers do not co-operate, as a rule, because human nature is as weak in them as in any other poor devil of a rational animal, but that they *can* co-operate; and that co-operation between philosophers can only be a conquest of the intellect over itself and the very universe of thought it has created — a difficult conquest indeed, achieved by intellectual rigor and

justice on the basis of irreducible and inevitably lasting antagonisms.

A distinction, moreover, seems to me to be relevant in this connection. The question can be considered either from the point of view of *doctrinal exchanges* between systems or from the point of view of the *mutual grasp* which various philosophical systems can have of each other, each being taken as a whole.

From the first point of view, or the point of view of doctrinal exchanges, each system can avail itself of the others for its own sake by dismembering them, and by feeding on and assimilating what it can take from them. That is co-operation indeed, but in quite a peculiar sense — as a lion co-operates with a lamb.

Yet from the second point of view, and in the perspective of the judgment which each system passes on the other, contemplating it as a whole, and as an object situated in an external sphere, and trying to do it justice, a mutual understanding is possible which cannot indeed do away with basic antagonisms, but which may create a kind of real though imperfect co-operation, to the extent that each system succeeds (1) in recognizing for the other, in a certain sense, a right to exist; and (2) in availing itself of the other, no longer by material *intussusception* and by borrowing or digesting parts of the other, but by bringing, thanks to the other, its own specific life and principles to a higher degree of achievement and extension.

It is on this genuine kind of co-operation that I would like to insist for a moment.

If we were able to realize that most often our mutually opposed affirmations do not bear on the same parts or aspects of the real and that they are of greater value than our mutual negations, then we should come nearer the first prerequisite of a genuinely philosophical understanding: that is, we should become better able to transcend and conquer our own system of signs and conceptual language, and to take on for a moment, in a provisional and tentative manner, the thought and approach of the other so as to come back, with this intelligible booty, to our own philosophical conceptualization and to our own system of reference.

Then, we are no longer concerned with analyzing or *sorting* the set of assertions peculiar to various systems in spreading them out, so to speak, on a single surface or level in order to examine



what conciliation or exchange of ideas they may mutually allow in their inner structure. But we are concerned with taking into account a third dimension, in order to examine the manner in which each system, considered as a specific whole, can, according to its own frame of reference, do justice to the other in taking a view of it and seeking to penetrate it as an object situated on the outside — in another sphere of thought.

From this standpoint, two considerations would appear all-important: the one is the consideration of the central *intuition* which lies at the core of each great philosophical doctrine; the other is the consideration of the *place* which each system could, according to its own frame of reference, grant the other system as the legitimate place the latter is cut out to occupy in the universe of thought.

Actually, each great philosophical doctrine lives on a central intuition which can be wrongly conceptualized and translated into a system of assertions seriously deficient or erroneous as such, but which, insofar as it is intellectual intuition, truly gets hold of some aspect of the real. And, consequently, each great philosophical doctrine, once it has been grasped in its central intuition and then re-interpreted in the frame of reference of another doctrine (in a manner that it would surely not accept), should be granted from the point of view of this other doctrine some place considered as legitimately occupied, be it in some imaginary universe.

If we try to do justice to the philosophical systems against which we take our most determined stand, we shall seek to discover both that intuition which they involve and that place we must grant them from our own point of view. And then we shall benefit from them, not by borrowing from them or exchanging with them certain particular views and ideas, but by seeing, thanks to them, more profoundly into our own doctrine, by enriching it from within and extending its principles to new fields of inquiry which have been brought more forcefully to our attention, but which we shall make all the more vitally and powerfully informed by these principles.

Thus there is not *toleration* between systems — a system cannot *tolerate* another system, because systems are abstract sets of ideas and have only intellectual existence, where the will to tolerate or not to tolerate has no part — but there can be *justice*, intellectual justice, between philosophical systems.

And between philosophers there can be tolerance and more than tolerance; there can be a kind of co-operation and fellowship, founded on intellectual justice and the philosophical duty of understanding another's thought in a genuine and fair manner. Nay more, there is no intellectual justice without the assistance of intellectual charity. If we do not *love* the thought and intellect of another as intellect and thought, how shall we take pains to discover what truths are conveyed by it while it seems to us defective or misguided, and at the same time to free these truths from the errors which prey upon them and to re-instate them in an entirely true systematization? Thus we love truth more than we do our fellow-philosophers, but we love and respect both.

At this point I should like to observe that, even when they are wrong, philosophers are a kind of mirror, on the heights of intelligence, of the deepest trends which are obscurely at play in the human mind at each epoch of history; (the greater they are, the more actively and powerfully radiant the mirror is). Now, since we are thinking beings, such mirrors are indispensable to us. After all, it is better for human society to have Hegelian errors with Hegel than to have Hegelian errors without Hegel — I mean hidden and diffuse errors rampant throughout the social body, which are Hegelian in type but anonymous and unrecognizable. A great philosopher who is wrong is like a beacon on the reefs, which says to seamen: steer clear of me; he enables men (at least those who have not been seduced by him) to *identify* the errors from which they suffer, and to become clearly aware of them, and to struggle against them. And this is an essential need of society, insofar as society is not merely animal society but society made up of persons endowed with intelligence and freedom.

And even if philosophers are hopelessly divided among themselves in their search for a superior and all-pervading truth, at least they seek this truth; and their very controversies, constantly renewed, are a sign of the necessity for such a search. These controversies do not witness to the illusory or unattainable character of the object that philosophers are looking for. They witness to the fact that this object is both most difficult and most crucial in importance: is not everything which is crucial in importance crucial also in difficulty? Plato told us that beautiful things are difficult, and

that we should not avoid beautiful dangers. Mankind would be in jeopardy, and soon in despair, if it shunned the beautiful dangers of intelligence and reason.

Moreover, many things are questionable and oversimplified in the commonplace insistence on the insuperable disagreements which divide philosophers. These disagreements do indeed exist. But in one sense there is more continuity and stability in philosophy than in science. For a new scientific theory completely changes the very manner in which the former ones posed the question. Whereas philosophical problems remain always the same, in one form or another; nay more, basic philosophical ideas, once they have been discovered, become permanent acquisitions in the philosophical heritage. They are used in various, even opposite, ways: they are still there. And finally, philosophers quarrel so violently because each one has seen some truth which, more often than not, has dazzled his eyes, and which he may conceptualize in an insane manner, but of which his fellow-philosophers must also be aware, each in his own perspective.

### III

At first glance it seems particularly shocking, as I observed at the beginning, that men dedicated to wisdom and to the grasping of the highest truths might be not only in mutual disagreement — which is quite normal — but might display, as happens more often than not in actual fact, more mutual intolerance — refusing one another any right intellectually to exist — than even potters, as Aristotle put it, or painters and writers with respect to each other. In reality this is not surprising, for mutual toleration relates essentially to living together in concrete existence; and, as a result, mutual toleration is easier in practical matters than in theoretical ones. When it is a question of rescuing a man from a fire, mutual toleration and co-operation between an atheist and a Christian, or an advocate of determinism and an advocate of free will, will be a matter of course. But when it comes to knowing the truth about the nature of the human will, the co-operation between the advocate of determinism and the advocate of free will will become more difficult. We just saw on what conditions and in overcoming what obstacles such co-operation between philosophers is possible. To tell



the truth, philosophers are naturally intolerant, and genuine tolerance among them means a great victory of virtue over nature in their minds. The same can be said, I am afraid, of theologians. This theme was particularly dear to Descartes, who made theologians (non-Cartesian theologians) responsible for all wars in the world. And yet both philosophers and theologians are surely able to overcome the natural bent I just alluded to, and to nurture all the more respect for the man in error as they are more eager to vindicate the truth he disregards or disfigures.

Thus we come to our third point: mutual understanding and co-operation — in uncompromising fidelity to truth as each one sees it — between men of different faiths: I do not mean on the temporal level and for temporal tasks; I mean on the very level of religious life, knowledge, and experience. If it is true that human society must bring together, in the service of the same terrestrial common good, men belonging to different spiritual families, how can the peace of that temporal society be lastingly assured if first in the domain that matters most to the human being — in the spiritual and religious domain itself — relationships of mutual respect and mutual understanding cannot be established?

I prefer the word fellowship to "tolerance" for a number of reasons. In the first place, the word *tolerance* relates not only to the virtue of mutual toleration between human individuals, which I am discussing in this lecture, but also to problems which are extraneous to my present topic. For instance, on the one hand there is the problem of "dogmatic tolerance": Has man a moral obligation to seek religious truth and to cling to it when he sees it? Yes indeed. Has the Church a right to condemn errors opposed to the deposit of divine revelation with which she has been entrusted? Yes indeed. And, on the other hand, there is the problem of "civil tolerance"<sup>5</sup>: Must civil society respect the realm of consciences and refrain from imposing a religious creed by coercion? Again, yes indeed.

In the second place the word *fellowship* connotes something positive — positive and elementary — in human relationships. It conjures up the image of travelling companions, who meet here

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<sup>5</sup> See Charles Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), I, 215–216, 283–284.

below by chance and journey through life — however fundamental their differences may be — good humoredly, in cordial solidarity and human agreement, or better to say, friendly and co-operative disagreement. Well then, for the reasons I have just mentioned the problem of good fellowship between the members of the various religious families seems to me to be a cardinal one for our age of civilization.

Let me say immediately that this attempt at rapprochement might easily be misunderstood. I shall therefore begin by clearing the ground of any possible sources of misunderstanding. Such a rapprochement obviously cannot be effectuated at the cost of straining fidelity, or of any yielding in intellectual integrity, or of any lessening of what is due to truth. Nor is there any question whatever either of agreeing upon I know not what common minimum of truth or of subjecting each one's convictions to a common index of doubt. On the contrary, such a coming together is only conceivable if we assume that each gives the maximum of fidelity to the light that is shown to him. Furthermore, it obviously can only be pure, and therefore valid and efficacious, if it is free from any *arrière-pensée* of a temporal nature and from even the shadow of a tendency to subordinate religion to the defense of any earthly interest of acquired advantage.

I am sure that everyone is agreed on these negative conditions I have just enumerated. But as soon as we pass on to positive considerations each one sees the very justification and the very reason for being of this good fellowship between believers of different religious families mirrored in his own particular outlook and in his own world of thought. And these outlooks are irreducibly heterogeneous; these worlds of thought never exactly meet. Until the day of eternity comes, their dimensions can have no common measure. There is no use closing one's eyes to this fact, which simply bears witness to the internal coherence of the systems of signs, built up in accordance with different principles, on which human minds depend for their cognitive life. Fundamental notions such as that of the absolute oneness of God have not the same meaning for a Jew as for a Christian; nor has the notion of the divine transcendence and incommunicability the same meaning for a Christian as for a Moslem; nor the notions of person, of free-

dom, grace, revelation, incarnation, of nature and the supernatural, the same meaning for the Orient as for the Occident. And the "non-violence" of the Indian is not the same as Christian "charity." No doubt, as I just said apropos of philosophical justice, it is the privilege of the human intelligence to understand other languages than the one it itself uses. It is none the less true that if, instead of being men, we were patterns of Pure Ideas, our nature would be to devour each other in order to absorb into our own world of thought whatever other such worlds might hold of truth.

But it happens that we are men, each containing within himself the ontological mystery of personality and freedom: and it is in this very mystery of freedom and personality that genuine tolerance or fellowship takes root. For the basis of good fellowship among men of different creeds is not of the order of the intellect and of ideas, but of the heart and of love. It is friendship, natural friendship, but first and foremost mutual love in God and for God. Love does not go out to essences nor to qualities nor to ideas, but to persons; and it is the mystery of persons and of the divine presence within them which is here in play. This fellowship, then, is not a fellowship of beliefs but the fellowship of men who believe.

The conviction each of us has, rightly or wrongly, regarding the limitations, deficiencies, errors of others does not prevent friendship between minds. In such a fraternal dialogue, there must be a kind of forgiveness and remission, not with regard to ideas — ideas deserve no forgiveness if they are false — but with regard to the condition of him who travels the road at our side. Every believer knows very well that all men will be judged — both himself and all others. But neither he nor another is God, able to pass judgment. And what each one is before God, neither the one nor the other knows. Here the "Judge not" of the Gospels applies with its full force. We can render judgment concerning ideas, truths, or errors; good or bad actions; character, temperament, and what appears to us of a man's interior disposition. But we are utterly forbidden to judge the innermost heart, that inaccessible center where the person day after day weaves his own fate and ties the bonds binding him to God. When it comes to that, there is only one thing to do, and that is to trust in God. And that is precisely what love for our neighbor prompts us to do.



I should like to dwell a moment on the inner law and the privileges of this friendship of charity, as regards precisely the relations between believers of different religious denominations (as well as between believers and non-believers). I have already made it sufficiently clear that it is wrong to say that such a friendship *transcends* dogma or *exists in spite of* the dogmas of faith. Such a view is inadmissible for all those who believe that the word of God is as absolute as His unity or His transcendence. A mutual love which would be bought at the price of faith, which would base itself on some form of eclecticism, or which, recalling Lessing's parable of the three rings, would say, "I love him who does not have my faith because, after all, I am not sure that my faith is the true faith, and that it bears the device of the true ring," in so saying would reduce faith to a mere historic inheritance and seal it with the seal of agnosticism and relativity. Such a love, for anyone who believes he has heard the word of God, would amount to putting man above God.

That love which is charity, on the contrary, goes first to God, and then to all men, because the more men are loved in God and for God, the more they are loved themselves and in themselves. Moreover this love is born in faith and remains within faith, while at the same time reaching out to those who have not the same faith. That is the very characteristic of love; wherever our love goes, it carries with it our faith.

Nor does the friendship of charity merely make us recognize the *existence* of others — although as a matter of fact here is something already difficult enough for men, and something which includes everything essential. Not only does it make us recognize that another exists, but it makes us recognize that he exists, not as an accident of the empirical world but as a human being who exists before God, and has the right to exist. While remaining within the faith, the friendship of charity helps us to recognize whatever beliefs other than our own include of truth and of dignity, of human and divine values. It makes us respect them, urges us on ever to seek in them everything that is stamped with the mark of man's original greatness and of the prevenient care and generosity of God. It helps us to come to a mutual understanding of one another. It does not make us go beyond our faith but beyond

ourselves. In other words, it helps us to purify our faith of the shell of egotism and subjectivity in which we instinctively tend to enclose it. And it also inevitably carries with it a sort of heart-rending, attached, as is the heart, at once to the truth we love and to the neighbor who is ignorant of that truth. This condition is even associated with what is called the "*ecumenical*" bringing together of divided Christians; how much more is it associated with the labor of bringing into mutual comprehension believers of every denomination?

I distrust any easy and comfortable friendship between believers of all denominations, I mean a friendship which is not accompanied, as it were, by a kind of compunction or soul's sorrow; just as I distrust any universalism which claims to unite in one and the same service of God, and in one and the same transcendental piety — as in some World's Fair Temple — all forms of belief and all forms of worship. The duty of being faithful to the light, and of always following it to the extent that one sees it, is a duty which cannot be evaded. In other words, the problem of conversion, for anyone who feels the spur of God, and to the extent that he is pricked by it, cannot be cast aside, any more than can be cast aside the obligation of the apostolate. And by the same token I also distrust a friendship between believers of the same denomination which is, as it were, easy and comfortable, because in that case charity would be reserved to their fellow-worshipers; there would be a universalism which would limit love to brothers in the same faith, a proselytism which would love another man only in order to convert him and only insofar as he is capable of conversion, a Christianity which would be the Christianity of *good* people as against *bad* people, and which would confuse the order of charity with what a great spiritual writer of the seventeenth century called a police-force order.

The spurious universalism I just alluded to — and which would make all faiths have their stand, window display, and loudspeaker in a World's Fair Temple, on the condition that all of them should confess they are *not sure* that they are conveying the word of God, and that none of them should claim to be the true Faith — is sometimes advocated in the name of Indian wisdom, which teaches a

kind of transcendent liberal indifference with respect to any definite creed.

At this point I should like to observe:

*First.* Such liberal indifference actually applies to non-Indian rather than Indian creeds, and consequently resembles very much an illusory theme of propaganda. Moreover, as a matter of fact, "Right view or right thinking is the first step in the path of the Buddha, and the word *orthodoxy* is precisely its Greek equivalent. In the Pali scriptures there is much that reads like accounts of heresy trials."<sup>6</sup> And finally was not Buddhism, which was born in India, persecuted by Brahmanism and expelled from India?

*Second.* Indian wisdom, be it Brahmanist or Buddhist, does not teach indifference to any supreme truth; it teaches undifferentiation of supreme truth, and this is a definite metaphysical creed indeed. To be sure, Indian metaphysics is rich with invaluable insights and experiences. Yet it is seriously mistaken, insofar as it teaches that the supreme Truth is sheer undifferentiation, and the Supreme Reality so transcendent that it cannot be known in any expressible manner, even through concepts and words which God Himself used to reveal Himself to us. And this boils down, on the one hand, to disregarding the intellect as such, which can grasp through analogy divine things themselves, and, on the other hand, to forbidding God the right to speak. Then all religious forms are embraced and absorbed in a formless religiosity.

*Third.* The Western or Westernized caricature of Indian metaphysics, which preaches, in the name of one "sophy" or another, indifference to any religious dogma and equivalence between all religious creeds henceforth decidedly relativized, displays itself a most arrogant dogmatism, asking from its believers unconditional surrender of their minds to teachers who are self-appointed prophets. And the kind of mysticism supposedly free from, and superior to, any revealed dogma, which is advocated by this cheap gnosticism, is but spiritual self-complacency or search for powers, which makes up for the loss of the sense of truth.

True universalism, as I have insisted all through this lecture, is just the opposite of indifference. The catholicity it implies is

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<sup>6</sup> Rev. Father Victor White, *op. cit.*



not a catholicity of relativism and indistinction, but the catholicity of reason, and first of all the catholicity of the Word of God, which brought salvation to all the human race and to whose mystical body all those who live in grace belong visibly or invisibly.<sup>7</sup> True universalism presupposes the sense of truth and the certainties of faith; it is the universalism of love which uses these very certainties of faith and all the resources of the intellect to understand better, and do full justice to, the other fellow. It is not supra-dogmatic, it is supra-subjective. We find a token of such universalism of love — not above faith but within faith, not above religious and philosophical truth but within religious and philosophical truth, to the extent to which everyone knows it — in the development of certain discussion groups between Moslems and Christians, for instance, or of certain studies in comparative theology and comparative mysticism. I would like to cite as an example the case of a book written a few years ago by two Thomist authors<sup>8</sup> on Moslem theology which proved to be so illuminating for Moslem as well as for Christian readers that a professor of the Al-Hazar University wished to translate it into Arabic.

As to comparative mysticism, it is genuinely comparative only if it avails itself of all the analytical instruments provided by philosophy and theology. According to the principles of Thomist philosophy and theology, it is a fact that, if divine grace exists and bears fruit in them, men of good will who live in non-Christian climates can experience the same *supernatural* mystical union with God "known as unknown"<sup>9</sup> as Christian contemplatives do: it is so, *not* because mystical experience is independent of faith, but because faith in the Redeemer can exist implicitly, together with the grace of Christ, in men who do not know His name, and this faith can develop into grace-given contemplation, through union of love with God. On the other hand, studies in *natural* mysticism have shown that the disciplines of the Yoga, for instance, normally

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<sup>7</sup> See the chapter "Catholicité" in the remarkable book *Chemins de l'Inde et philosophie Chrétienne* by Olivier Lacombe (Paris: Alsatia, 1956).

<sup>8</sup> Louis Gardet and M.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane* (Paris: Vrin, 1948).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. contra Gent.*, III, 49. Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mystica Theologia*, cap. 2.

terminate in a mystical experience which is authentic in its own sphere but quite different from grace-given contemplation, and has for its object that invaluable reality which is the Self, in its pure act of existing, immediately attained through the void created by intellectual concentration. Thus it is that a Christian can do full justice, in the Christian perspective itself, to mystical experiences which take place in non-Christian religious areas;<sup>10</sup> and he can develop genuine understanding of, and respect for those who are dedicated to these experiences.

I have given these indications only to illustrate the fact that genuine human fellowship is not jeopardized — quite the contrary! — it is fostered by zeal for truth, if only love is there.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Louis Gardet, *Expériences mystiques en terres non-chrétiennes* (Paris: Alsatia, 1953).

## BOOK REVIEWS

MOTHER OF GOD, by Father Cyril Bernard, O.D.C., The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, 174 pp., \$2.50

*Mother of God* by Father Cyril Bernard, O.D.C., published in Italy in 1956 under the title *Madonna*, is neatly self-descriptive in its own subtitle — "A Study of Mary in Scripture and Tradition."

In an introduction to the American edition, Frank Duff cites many benefits to be derived from the publication of *Mother of God*. Because it views our Blessed Mother only in the light of Scripture and tradition, Mr. Duff hopes that it will provide solid ground upon which Catholics may build their devotion to her. Mr. Duff writes, "If our idea of her (Mary's) role is deficient, we do not repair it by multiplying our prayers to her." Thus, our understanding of Mary's place in the divine plan is incomplete when we see her in the light of a devotion that is prompted by this line of thought: she is God's Mother; therefore, she will secure from Him all our requests.

*Mother of God* is far different from popular devotional books which serve to stimulate a love for our Lady by indicating her virtues. Rather, this book presents the reasons *why* Mary holds so eminent a place in the life of the Church. Father Cyril Bernard considers in the light of Scripture and tradition Mary's place in God's eternal design, her natural and supernatural perfections, her virginity, her twofold maternity, her assumption, her mission in the world today.

Frank Duff, continuing his eulogium of *Mother of God* writes, "Possessors of knowledge are fond of supposing that 'people will not understand' and that it would be a waste of time to try to explain 'these lofty doctrines.' . . . But what is incomprehensible about Our Lady's mission? It is fundamental in religion and therefore it is meant to be understood by all. I have yet to encounter the person who was unable to absorb it when it was explained. And explained it must be, for the average idea of Mary's place is stark in its poverty. It is that Mary bore a Son who was God and that ever since He likes to listen to her petitions. . . . Of course that is true, but it is only part of the truth. Mary's place in the Catholic system is too commanding, too primary, to be contained in that degree of logic."



If there be a gap between Marian theology and the ordinary layman's knowledge of it, ought there not be a beginning to bridge it?

Frank Sheed in *Theology and Sanity* seems to proffer the answer to that question. He writes, "To many, the idea of bringing the intellect fully into action in religion seems almost repellent. The intellect seems so cold and measured and measuring, and the will so warm and glowing. Many regard it (the use of the intellect) as at least unnecessary — at any rate for the layman — and possibly dangerous." And may we not apply his conclusion to our Blessed Mother? "Love of God is immeasurably more important than knowledge of God; but if a man loves God knowing a little about Him, he should love God more for knowing more about Him: for every new thing known about God is a new reason for loving Him."

*Mother of God*, highly regarded among members of the Carmelite community, makes a distinctive contribution to Marian literature in an area and at a level where it is needed. The author assumes nothing as to his reader's knowledge of Church doctrine about the Mother of God. He presents it lovingly, clearly, briefly, and simply. The book is not devotional reading, but it will most certainly incite love through greater knowledge.

Sister Mary Fanchon, C.S.J., Milton, Mass.

**QUEEN OF HEAVEN, (A Short Treatise on Marian Theology)**, by René Lauretin, translated from the French by Gordon Smith, Clonmore-Burns, Oates, Dublin & London, 1956; The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, 142 pp., \$2.50

This book has been written *for a large public*. While it is not a book for highly specialized theologians, neither is it a popular devotional work for the simple faithful. It addresses itself rather to an intellectual sector — both Catholic and non-Catholic — which is interested in knowing the origin and evolution of Catholic doctrine about the Blessed Virgin Mary and about the problems that emerge in Catholic theology from her personality. The formidable task that this work encompasses is bound to cause difficulties, but I think that the author has successfully accomplished the job he set out to do.

The book is divided into two parts: in the first part, the author gives us a brief history of the origin and development of Marian doctrine through the centuries; and in the second, an abridgment or summary — quite well made, in general — of the principal problems from the

Annunciation to the Assumption of our Blessed Mother. Finally, a bibliography — in which French authors naturally predominate, since it is to this nationality that the author belongs — completes the present book.

Much could be said of the point of view of the author on some questions — for instance, his concept of the immortality of our Blessed Mother (p. 115, note 2); Marian presence in perfect souls (p. 123, note 5); his concept of Mary's Mediation, which the author believes is nothing else than an aspect of her motherhood (pp. 123–124); etc. Nevertheless, the present book seems to be excellent for the readers to whom it is directed.

Father Otilio of the Child Jesus, O.C.D., Washington, D. C.

**THE AMERICAN PARISH AND THE ROMAN LITURGY,**  
by Rev. H. H. Reinhold, The Macmillan Company, New  
York, 148 pp., \$3.50

“Grant to all Christian peoples an understanding of that which they profess, and a love of the divine gift they are wont to receive” (Lenten Collect).

This book on our Liturgy is written by a scholar, an expert in the liturgical field. But Father Reinhold is not only a liturgical scholar. His understanding and love of the Church have been expressed in another quite different book, *The Soul Afire* (in England, *The Spear of Gold*), a collection of writings of the mystics. The material chosen for this anthology reveals Father Reinhold's concept of mysticism proper, its basis in Scripture and Liturgy. Mention is made of this other book to show that Father Reinhold is no narrow ritualist but one who comprehends the essentials of both public and private worship, and appreciates their interdependency.

Though evidence of scholarship is apparent throughout *The American Parish and the Roman Liturgy*, its outstanding plea is not for the Liturgy as it should be for its own sake — a theoretical argument. Instead, adequate liturgical expression is sought for the very practical reason that it is the divinely given means of worship, or more simply — through real participation in the liturgy God and man are united. It is the means given to Christ's members of going “To the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.”

Many of Father Reinhold's readers will feel that his scholarship puts him in a class quite beyond them. But it is a delight to stretch our minds toward his thought. We absorb more of it than we realize.

The book is a moving appreciation of the spirit of the Roman Liturgy — its “grand simplicity, its sobriety hostile to all exuberance, fully matter-of-fact — rich in manly, adult, mature feeling.” Father Reinhold writes of the “unreflected” quality of the liturgy — its “immediateness” and “simplicity of heart.” “The liturgy is total, not sectional; it is organic, not mechanic; dramatic, not repetitious — logically dynamic and clear.” Certain modern devotional practices are mentioned as unliturgical in spirit — lacking the strong, calm dignity of the liturgy proper.

The Liturgy includes “Mass, the ministration of all sacraments and derived sacramentals and the performance of the choir office (or Breviary).” In it is present “the ever living Christ in His totality — for liturgy is actual presence, the nearness of God.”

The basic sacred action of the Mass needs emphasis. People must understand it in order to enter into it fully. The simple fact is that the participant “gives himself to God and receives his transformed gift, consecrated through the death and resurrection of Jesus.”

The urgency of our present world situation is evident — “the vision the people need is a new appraisal of man’s place in the universe, an anchorage in the values and currents that are sweeping him to and fro.” In the liturgy we enter into a real relationship with God and with our fellow men — into a, “however faint, ‘sharing of divine nature’ with Jesus Christ by being implanted into His Body, the Church.”

Margaret Gardner, Norwich, Vt.

**VIRGIL MICHEL AND THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT,**  
by Paul B. Marx, O.S.B., The Liturgical Press, Collegeville,  
Minn., 1957, 466 pp., \$5.00

The publication of *Virgil Michel* is current evidence of the contribution of the monks of St. John’s Abbey to the true Benedictine tradition spanning the centuries from Monte Cassino to our own day.

The author richly deserves the superlative praise he is receiving from reviewers. Father Marx gives a completely objective presentation of the liturgical movement, as well as an intimate understanding of the character and thought of his subject. Admirable scholarship and careful research are manifested; yet, the carefully edited chapter footnotes neither distract nor delay the reader. One cannot overestimate the task of the author: examining and selecting the voluminous correspondence, lectures, essays, and editorials of a contemporary writer to produce this amazingly attractive summary. Logically organized into chapters on the relationship of liturgy to Catholic life, religious education, cul-



ture, social and philosophical thought and expressed in a natural style, the book has a twofold merit for the scholarly minded.

All who are in any way interested in the development of the Church in our country over the past thirty years will discover in these pages a succinct, informative appraisal of a cross section of the intellectual, religious, and social thought of the period.

*Virgil Michel* is indeed more than a mere biography of a truly dedicated priest, who, in an actual apostolate of about ten years before his untimely death at the age of forty-eight, exerted profound influence on the liturgical revival and accomplished incredible tasks in the face of tremendous obstacles.

Dom Virgil Michel was one of fifteen children, whose parents immigrated to Minnesota from Germany. The proximity to St. John's Abbey significantly associated the boy with the Benedictines for his high school and college education. Here he came under the powerful example of Dom Alcuin, who was later his Abbot. This providential relationship may be considered the beginning of the liturgical apostolate at Collegeville.

Entering the Benedictine Order after his second year of college, Dom Virgil was sent to do graduate work at Catholic University after his ordination. He received his degree in the field of philosophy in 1916. The turning point in his life, however, was his study and travel in Europe, where he pursued his beloved subject, philosophy, at Rome and Louvain. At the latter he came under the dynamic leadership of Dom Lambert Beaudain of the Abbey of Mont Cesar and subsequently became acquainted with the great liturgical centers of Europe.

Upon his return to the United States in 1925, he organized the liturgical movement at St. John's with the publication of *Orate Fratres* (now called *Worship*). From this date on, his name is associated with the liturgical pioneers such as Fathers Busch, Ellard, Hellriegel, Mathis, Reinhold — all heralds, zealously promoting the reforms recommended by St. Pius X.

Indeed Dom Virgil's name may be linked with America's historical past. The seed planted in 1787 by the first proponent of liturgical reform, Archbishop John Carroll, was nurtured by this monk. Likewise, he promoted what the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore pleaded for in 1884 — a return to the fundamentals, the Sacrifice of the Mass, sacramental life, and the Divine Office.

Dom Virgil's apostolate was especially directed to the laity, and it may be epitomized in his own words, "There is no time and no place when a Christian cannot be a lighthouse for the Way, the Truth, and

the Life that is Christ." He stressed the disaster of separating social action from the liturgical movement. Today's efforts to combine the two would have delighted him.

This reviewer was privileged to be present with the two thousand delegates to the 18th National Liturgical Week at Collegeville, when fitting tribute was paid in public prayer at the grave of this zealous liturgical pioneer, to whom all present felt a great debt of gratitude.

St. John's Abbey may be justly proud of the work of Dom Virgil and its evaluation by Father Marx. Significantly the author states that from the earliest years of Virgil Michel's apostolate, the Sunday Conventual High Mass at the Abbey was offered to implore God's blessing on the liturgical apostolate. Surely it is evident that the *ora et labora* of the twentieth-century sons of St. Benedict have borne a full harvest from which the faithful have reaped rich fruits.

Sister M. Francille, C.S.J., Newton, Mass.

**ONE IN CHRIST**, by Illtud Evans, O.P., Fides, Chicago, 1957, 82 pp., 95 cents

In a recent article (*Worship*, Dec. 10, 1957) on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of *Mediator Dei*, Monsignor Hellriegel writes:

"But there are millions of priests and people in the world who have not only studied *Mediator Dei* (and *Motu Proprio*) but have benefited by them to such a degree that their spiritual outlook has been ennobled, their minds lifted up, their hearts filled with a tremendous love for the Mystical Body, The Church, and its life-veins, the liturgy."

One gets the general impression that Father Evans, the author of *One in Christ* is such a priest. This awareness of, appreciation for, and love of the Mystical Body of Christ shines forth in his book. Though written by a Dominican theologian, it is not a dogmatic treatise. It is merely the stating of certain fundamental views of our religion. The emphasis is upon the fact that they are not to be merely beliefs but realities to be lived by. He is simply positing a fact and driving home that here is a tremendous reality that is worth living. The book seems to serve as a stimulus toward making the Mystical Body a real part of our life. The summation of the whole work is this: we do not live our lives for ourselves, He lives His life in us.

Five chapters make up the eighty pages of *One in Christ*. The notion of oneness, "community" is stressed in the opening chapter which touches our incorporation, or being grafted, into Christ. The meaning of oneness with Christ is developed in the second Chapter, "The Life of the Mass." The concluding paragraphs on Scripture (Chap. III) serve as a pre-

amble to the Paschal Mystery. This chapter, "The Work of Worship," is very well placed before the last one on charity, to show that the central mystery of our faith is the Death and Resurrection, the beginning of a new life, the birth of the Mystical Body with its conditions of total self-surrender and love. Truths that have always been part of our faith must today be reevaluated so that our times may bring forth the aspects we need.

"The purpose of the Easter Vigil is to make the share of the faithful in the mystery of their redemption much more evident. This is the pattern of the Paschal Vigil. It is an example of what the liturgy is supposed to achieve: the prayer of the Church which encloses man and all his needs in the redeeming work of Christ and His Church."

The summit is reached in the last chapter where the author states the real need is *to live what we believe*. We are *all* one in Christ and what we do to one another is done to Christ. That which was begun at baptism is to lead to the perfecting of charity, for "to do good to others flows inevitably from the virtue of charity, since 'others' are no longer strangers, they are one with us in Christ." Likewise "no longer can we minister, as Mary and Martha did, to the needs of Christ in the flesh; but our neighbor is Christ." Here the author is spelling out quite clearly what this mystery means "In serving another, Christ is served." Yet "It is Christ who teaches, heals, forgives."

The task set before the editor of this little book was how to gather the authors' material into a unified entity; for much of this material appeared as articles in different periodicals. Credit must be given for an editing job deftly done. The only retarding influence was Chapter Three, on Scripture. Though the reading is not the easiest, the effort is rewarding. And the occasional brilliant statement chanced upon can well serve as worthy food for thought. It is the hope of this reviewer that the author furnish the reading public with further developments of the truths he recalls to us.

Father Timothy, O.C.D., Brookline, Mass.

## METHODS OF PRAYER IN THE DIRECTORY OF THE CARMELITE REFORM OF TOURAINE, by Father Kilian J. Healy, O.Carm., Rome, Institutum Carmelitanum, 1956, 184 pp.

Not too long ago this reviewer was a little amazed and slightly shocked to hear a religious of a mixed Order ask what norms a religious could follow when he is out of his monastery so he would not lose



the spirit of his Institute. It sounded as though he were advocating one way of breathing when a religious is in his choir and another way when he is engaged in the active apostolate. In his excellent introduction to *Methods of Prayer in the Directory of the Carmelite Reform of Touraine* Father Kilian Healy, O.Carm., states: "To be engaged in active work and at the same time retain the primacy of the contemplative life is no easy task and yet the problem must be faced honestly and directly, for there is a real problem. We believe it can be solved successfully by taking a firm stand on the fundamental principle that within the Order activity depends upon the contemplative spirit as the branch upon the vine, and if ever divorced from it, the life of Carmel will wither and die. The Carmelite, therefore, must be taught to be first and foremost a man of solitude and prayer. He must be personally convinced that the success of his apostolic labors depends upon his fidelity to the contemplative life." Father Healy's contention, and it is sound practical common sense, is that if a man is a man of prayer he will exude the spirit of his Order whether he be in the choir, the confessional, the pulpit, or the classroom.

The present Holy Father is keenly aware that certain changes must be made in religious Orders — changes not for the sake of change but rather for the progress of the Church. After the War there was not a scarcity of Order priests in France and Italy but there was a scarcity of Order priests who were qualified to meet the demands of the Church. As a result Pope Pius XII in his *Sedes Sapientiae* has given certain norms to govern and guide the formation of religious priests in their spiritual and apostolic formation. A fifth year (for special apostolic training) has been added to the theological course in seminaries of religious orders or congregations, in secular institutes and societies of the common life. It is now up to each religious family to incorporate the ideas of the Holy Father into its curriculum and at the same time retain its original spirit. Father Healy believes this can be done in the Carmelite Order by a concentrated study of the notion of prayer as was handed down by the Reform of Touraine.

The Order of Carmel was originally eremitical and the first Rule of the Carmelites was approved in 1226 (it was drawn up by Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, between 1206 and 1214). When the Carmelites were forced to flee from Mount Carmel to Europe it was necessary that the Rule be changed since the original Rule was suited for the eremitical life and in Europe the Carmelites were classified as mendicants. Two Dominicans made the necessary modifications and a second Rule was approved by Pope Innocent IV in 1247. This second Rule was

followed for almost two hundred years and then there was another mitigation by Pope Eugene IV in 1432. Various Reforms were started in the Order, the most notable ones being that of St. Teresa in Spain and that of Father Philip Thibault in France. In 1593 Teresa's group of Carmelites were separated from the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance and are now known as Discalced Carmelites. They follow the revised Rule of Innocent IV (the second Rule approved for the Carmelites). Philip Thibault's Reform became known as the Reform of Touraine.

*Methods of Prayer in the Directory of the Carmelite Reform of Touraine* is an exposition and study of the prayer life taught in the Reform of Touraine. This Reform in the seventeenth century drew up a set of constitutions for monasteries and provinces directly under the influence of Touraine and also for independent reforms that were going on in Latin countries. When the constitutions of the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance were drawn up in 1930 they were based on the constitutions of the Reform of Touraine. Consequently, the effects of Touraine have lasted down to the present time.

The author, in his study of the prayer life in Touraine, posits and then answers the following questions: *Who composed the Method of Prayer? What are the ways of prayer it teaches? What is their nature and purpose? From what sources are they derived?* Hence, it is a rather technical book and will not appeal to the average man or even to the average religious. Father Healy points out that the three ways of mental prayer developed in the *Method of Prayer* are methodical meditation (preparation, meditation, and affections), mixed prayer (internal thoughts and external words) and aspirative prayer (the presence of God). They are not to be understood as degrees of prayer but rather as three ways of ordinary prayer that lead to conversation with Christ. Stress is laid on the part that the will plays in prayer and while the act of the intellect is necessary it is considered as a means to keep one's heart raised continually to God.

Father Healy shows that the sources used in the *Method of Prayer* are Sacred Scripture, the Rule and Tradition of Carmel, the Ignatian School, Louis of Granada, Blossius, the Discalced Carmelite School (St. Teresa is quoted six times — more than any other authority save Sacred Scripture), St. Francis de Sales, and of course the notable Carmelites of Touraine, Ven. John of St. Sampson (the blind Lay Brother mystic) and Ven. Dominic of St. Albert. It must not be inferred that the sources mentioned above were used entirely in the *Method of Prayer* for it is not a mere compilation of the methods of others. The author says

that "its methods of prayer represent the essential elements of mental prayer taken from the great spiritual writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the great writers within the Order."

As a whole the *Method of Prayer* is like a thesis in ascetical theology and while it is a masterful work and a great contribution to Carmelite literature it will not receive the audience it deserves. However, all Carmelites and students of ascetical theology will find it rewarding. If anyone wonders why so much time was spent on such a highly specialized work that will appeal to just a few, Father Healy's answer is in the introduction: "Every Order recognizes prayer as a normal ordinary means to grow in charity." Without prayer our apostolic work will be futile but with a solid foundation in prayer a religious will always keep the spirit of his Institute. The book is bound with a paper cover and there is no price mentioned.

Father Gregory, O.C.D., Brookline, Mass.

**THE CELTIC SAINTS**, by Daphne D. C. Pochin Mold, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, 160 pp., appendix, bibl., index, \$3.00

If there is such a thing as Irish caviar, this fine, flavorful bit of research is it. Out of a rich background of Gaelic culture, Miss Pochin Mold, author of seven, documented books of Gaelic history, presents a monograph on Ireland's saints and scholars. She enhances her material with leisurely writing style and the scholarly approach.

Miss Pochin Mold defines that very vague term *Celtic Church* as the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, from the arrival of the first missionaries in the fifth century to Anglo-Norman invasions in the twelfth (p. 13). Among the Celtic saints she selects for discussion are Kevin, Brigit, Columbanus, Gall, and Finbarr.

Her sources form a triplicate. First are the books Celtic monks used and studied — Scriptures, Fathers of the Church, Latin classics, and their own pre-Christian Bardic tradition; second are surviving fragments of Celtic prayer, liturgy, commentary, i.e., the seventh-century Antiphonary of Bangor, and the eighth-century Stowe Missal and the *Rules* of the Celtic saints; third are archaeological remains — the Ardagh Chalice, the stone carving of the High Crosses such as that of Monasterboice, beehive oratories and cells, monastic ruins.

The author's interpretive approach discloses that Irish ecclesiastical learning mainly concerned itself with conservation and study of existing material rather than with new and original thought (cf. p. 44). Thus, in Chapter 6 *The Mass and the Liturgy* we are shown how Celtic



liturgy drew from Gallican, Mozarabic, and Oriental sources, and added them to its own native piety. Irish monasticism is demonstrated as integration of the spirituality of the Desert Fathers of Egypt and eastern Europe, commencing with St. Anthony in the third century and St. John Cassian in the fifth, to the tenth century in which Irish monasticism ended. Devotion to Mary in its Celtic forms interlaces all the pages while one dynamic chapter *The Son of the Virgin* is entirely Mary's, and here, on the contrary, the Gael distinguishes himself for the very original, articulate form of his early love of God's Mother.

The final chapter *Island of Saints* attempts a summary of Gaelic sanctity and Gaelic mysticism. This chapter's thesis seems to be that Celtic mysticism differed from mysticism as found in the Church in other lands and eras. The comparative proof chosen is St. John of the Cross, an unfortunate choice since it is evident (pp. 138-139) that the author has not read his works. However if this is a field for further research, no doubt some day Church scholars equipped for investigation in the domain of sanctity and mysticism, may give us a study of Celtic saints in their approach to God. Thus this historical introduction by Miss Pochin Mold would be carried to completion and provide inspiring examples of Gaelic contemplative love of God for all interested in the spiritual life.

Mary Kiely, Providence, R. I.

**SAINT BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS**, by Monsignor Francis Trochu, translated from the French and adapted by John Joyce, S.J., Pantheon Books, Inc., New York, 1958, 400 pp., \$4.95

All through the ages the earth-bound course of mankind has been interrupted from time to time by incidents which belie those formulas for reality based purely on the physical order of the universe. At a precise and unpredictable moment in history, at a specific locale on our globe, Heaven touches earth, and reality is seen to have dimensions and a significance that transcend material concepts of time and space.

One of these incidents occurred a hundred years ago in a small French town, when a young peasant girl was lifted out of obscurity by personal visits from the Queen of Heaven. We know the results of these visitations. Lourdes has become an international place of pilgrimage. The things that take place there recall words spoken once long ago in another spot on the globe: "Go and relate . . . what you have seen. The blind see, the lame walk. . . ." Reproductions of the grotto, with statues of

the Immaculate Conception standing in a rocky recess and Bernadette kneeling before her, are in parish churches all over the world.

What manner of person this young girl was Monsignor Trochu tells us in an authoritative and comprehensive biography drawn from primary sources of evidence, published in France in 1954. The excellent English adaptation by Father John Joyce, S.J., has come out in the United States in time for the centennial of the first vision at Massabielle. Among the many attractive features of this book are the photographs of Bernadette and some of the people and places that participated in her mission, a map of the locale, and a very complete index.

The happy combination of the author's ability to unearth and assess a wealth of historical records, his deep understanding of human nature in the light of its supreme goal, and his rare (especially among hagiographers) grace of objectivity, make this book an event in itself. With an "art that conceals art" all of these gifts are subordinated to that of his compelling narrative power in the relation of the extraordinary events that took place in the life of a seemingly infraordinary child. He gives us her story in the framework of the community in which she lived, throwing revelant sidelights on the characters of the members of her family and the widening circle of people, great and small, believers and doubters, clergy and secular officials, who were drawn into the orbit of her adventure. For the drama that led to the Church's recognition of the validity of her visions was enacted by a wide and variegated cast of characters. Two of these, Abbé Peyramale, the parish priest, and Mother Vauzou, mistress of novices at Nevers, played an important part, not only in this development, but also in Bernadette's interior growth. Father Peyramale was at first antagonistic to the visions, but later became their warmest champion. Mother Vauzou's antagonism, on the other hand, never relented during Bernadette's life. In neither case does Monsignor Trochu make moral judgments. Whatever people's attitudes were toward his heroine, he takes pains to point out that they were in all likelihood acting in accordance with their lights, and certainly all that they did contributed to the inscrutable designs of divine mercy.

Above all, he reveals with penetrating insight the heart of a simple young girl, hidden from the world by the obscurity and poverty of her family, physically handicapped by asthma, and singular only for her inability to master even the rudiments of the primitive education offered to children of her station. Early in the book, however, he makes the reader conscious of the seed of virtue embedded in this soil of "hostile" circumstance: a wholehearted acceptance of her lot that gave her soul freedom to express itself in spontaneous gaiety, selfless generosity, and

unerring childlike wisdom. It was perhaps this virtue which made her a singular candidate for our Lady's special confidence and enabled her to accept with steadfast simplicity and earnestness the full measure of what it entailed: all of the ecstasy bestowed by the visions, as far as it was accorded, seeking no more; and all of the sorrow implicit in being made an accomplice of the Mother of Sorrows.

It is in the last section of his book that Monsignor Trochu comes to grips with the core of his subject. Here we see Bernadette, after the reopening of the grotto to the public and the vindication of her efforts, living a life of abnegation as a Sister of Charity. In the hands of a writer less aware of the supremacy of spiritual values this part of the book would have been an anticlimax. In Monsignor Trochu's hands it is just the opposite. However pertinent the miracles at Lourdes are to the status of the Church in the world, however much surcease from pain a suffering humanity has found in its healing waters, he shows that for Bernadette the successful accomplishment of the task entrusted to her thus far was but the prelude to another mission — that of becoming a victim soul. Obediently, systematically, and with unflagging docility during the thirteen years of her life in the convent, she seized with loving fortitude every propitious circumstance that lent itself to her purpose. The vow of obedience that obliged her to keep silent about her visions, the relentless antagonism of her superior, her own physical sufferings, and the terrible mental anguish of the dark night of the soul — all were patiently and humbly accepted as means of performing the penance her love for "the Beautiful Lady" demanded of her.

From the crucible of these ordeals, entered into by a tender young girl (however highly favored), Monsignor Trochu shows the emergence of an adult of heroic proportions. For all of its abundance of contributory detail, this book is primarily the genesis of a soul. As it mounts to its cumulative climax it discloses the height and the depth of the inscape of sanctity.

Elaine Malley, N. Y.

**THE WALLED GARDEN**, by Hugh Ross Williamson, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1957, 321 pp., \$4.00

Williamson's penetrating revelation of his sheltered childhood and varied occupations affords us an unusual insight into not only the man's life but his thinking. In an environment shaped intellectually and spiritually by a father and grandfather who were both Protestant ministers, the author grew up with a keen awareness of the importance of tradition,



not only in the religious, but in the cultural sphere as well.

This is the story of a man who, in his own words, accepted "the gross Protestant perversions of facts as historical truths instead of going at the outset to the proper Catholic sources." And yet, in an age when reason derides faith, he can say with unswerving conviction that "the gift of faith is, indeed, a gift dispensed by the mercy of God and in no way attainable by any intellectual process." Apropos of this is his letter to one of his father's friends who had suggested that Williamson's rejection of organized religion was merely a passing phase, in which the author said, "My reason still rejects Catholicism but so it does Protestantism and I have come to the conclusion that perhaps Reason isn't so infallible after all."

Believing in the Church as an "indestructible truth-telling Thing" Williamson yet spent thirty-eight years vainly seeking some common ground of reconciliation between Rome and the Church of England. This religious schizophrenia was to vex him continually until, as he said, "the comparative triviality of the issue of South India" opened the way to his irrevocable decision to submit to Rome.

However harassing his spiritual conflict, his worldly achievements seemed to suffer little. In the fields of journalism, the theater, writing, and politics his reputation was top-notch. And running through these activities like an imperishable thread is the man's unshakable integrity. He would not compromise in any area his firm principles of conduct and thinking.

Alternating for many years between attending Mass at England and at Rome, Williamson was like a small child torn between two parents. The persistence of his opinion that England would return to the faith by the Catholicization of the Church of England from the inside was an *idée fixe*. To "bring about the reversal of the Reformation" led to the author's becoming a priest in the Church of England. The crux of his problems lay in two questions: one, "Were Anglican Orders valid?"; and, two, "What was 'lawful authority' in the Church of England?"

The catalyst to his thinking came in 1955 in an action of the archbishops, bishops, and representatives of the clergy of the Church of England whereby they officially recognized the validity of the Orders of the Church of South India, thus asserting that there was no essential difference between the Holy Communion, as consecrated by the Anglican priest, and the bread and wine offered as a "memorial." It opened Williamson's eyes to the fact that Anglicanism is, like Congregationalism, a "Protestant sect."

An interesting note, in passing, revealing the author's devotion to

truth is found in the results of his research in connection with the Gunpowder Plot, hitherto revealed in history books as a Catholic plot to destroy the government. Williamson's inquiries convinced him that "the Plot was engineered by the Protestant Government using *agents provocateurs*, forgery, bribery, perjury, and torture for the purpose of discrediting and destroying Catholicism in England."

This warm, completely frank book gives us a picture not only of the man but of the currents of his time. It is the story of one who, though unaware of it, was a spiritual Roman throughout his life and who, finally, through the gift of grace, "inside the walls . . . found the freedom and the safety and the happiness of the garden again." Chesterton, in his sonnet on his conversion, gives it a lifelike reality when he says:

"The moment when I bowed my head  
And the whole world turned over and came upright."

David J. Concannon, Newport, R. I.

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, Book One: *Going to God*, by Sister Jane Marie Murray, O.P., Fides Publishers Association, Chicago, 1957, 444 pp.**

The appearance of a new religion textbook is usually met with an admixture of enthusiasm and apprehension. Enthusiasm is felt because so many realize that there is no area of Catholic education in which a good textbook is more sorely needed. This enthusiasm, however, is usually tempered by a realistic apprehension brought about by the many inadequate books already given to us as aids in this most important work.

The book under discussion is intended for the ninth grade. It is the first in a series of four aimed at the secondary-school level. Our comments will be limited to this single volume. If some considerations seem to be lacking, it is due to the incomplete nature of this type of evaluation.

The author began quite systematically by analyzing the subject matter to be taught and also the nature of the receptive agent, the pupil. This careful analysis probably accounts for the author's success in achieving a presentation of essentials in a style which is most appealing to the ninth grader.

In the determination of essentials one sees the presence of new emphases which will bring Christ and religion to life. The Redemption is presented in all its historical authenticity, yet it is brought to life by its personal application to the life of the student. The redeeming

role of Christ is portrayed and is completed by showing the founding of the Church and the receiving of its mandate from Christ to save all men. Then the living significance of this commission and its continuation in our lives is demonstrated by an extensive treatment of the Mass. The Liturgy of the Mass is a most valuable part of this book, for it teaches and trains these young minds how to take part in the liturgical life of the Church, thereby becoming living and active members of the Mystical Body. The matter chosen for this first year seems most apt because of its intrinsic importance and its effective chronological timing in order to be formative to the maximal degree.

This subject matter, though deep and intangible in many aspects, is dogmatic in a familiar and personal way. There is a casual manner of narration which brings about teaching as one glides along the informative informal explanation of some theological truth. Much is taught by insinuation or a friendly side remark of some fact presumed to be known by the reader. This technique spurs the reader to pay close attention in order not to miss what he should already know or makes him investigate the question further in order to make up for this implied deficiency. There is depth of content, yet there is simplicity. Many times in order to achieve simplicity the doctrine is watered down to a grade-school level. This has been avoided very effectively by a superb mastery of language.

Many times when a new tool comes on the market, it is well suited for the work intended, and it fits the mechanical parts well. This precision of function, however, is often lost because the nature of the user was not taken into consideration. Although well adapted to its purpose, it is poorly adjusted to the worker. A religion textbook is a tool, a most valuable tool for the teacher. Many religion textbooks are published which contain a lucid and accurate summary of the Catholic doctrine. They become quite ineffective, however, when we experience how difficult some of them are to use as teaching aids. Sister Jane Marie avoids this pitfall. Not only are the contents systematically and clearly presented but attention has been given to its role as a teaching aid. The outlines and suggested discussions at the end of each chapter help the teacher present more completely and concretely the matter found in the preceding unit. These suggested projects bring about a greater active student participation in the learning of religion not only by stimulating discussions but also by encouraging further research.

The author does not stop here, however. She leads the student from the theoretical to the practical by introducing the "Laboratory for Apostolic Life." This section aims at involving the young student as a



living witness of Christ and His doctrine. This makes the book more than a transmitter of knowledge. By stimulating apostolic living in this manner, it becomes a powerful ally of the student Catholic Action movements.

In short, our initial enthusiasm was justified and our apprehension is appeased with the hope that the other three volumes will be as meaningful to the student and as helpful to the teacher as the first.

(Rev.) Henry P. Ouellette, Matignon High School,  
Cambridge, Mass.

**FRONTIERS IN AMERICAN CATHOLICISM**, by Walter J. Ong, S.J., The Macmillan Co., New York, 1957, 125 pp., \$2.50

In this perceptive analysis of American Catholicism the gifted author pushes bravely beyond the existing frontiers of critical study in this area with results that are happy and brilliant. Briefly stated, this book is concerned with the Catholic position in the cultural pluralism of America. As such it deals with problems arising out of the relationship between the business world and Catholic life, or the Catholic approach to technology (a staggering problem which the Holy Father called to our attention in his stirring Christmas message), as well as other particularly American problems.

The first essay in this collection is a penetrating examination of the American Catholic mentality. According to Father Ong our Catholic cultural life in this country is characterized by an exaggerated subservience to Europe, and this points to the main weakness in the intellectual outlook of American Catholics — the lack of a well-developed historical viewpoint. Catholics today, fortunately, are becoming ever more conscious of this lack, and they are realizing more and more how important this historical view is “. . . important in forcing Catholics to a practical realization that there are theological problems raised in terms of the reality which is America for which the answers cannot be found already framed in theology manuals.”

In his essay concerned with the impinging of the business world upon Catholic life, Father Ong shows again how fresh his powers of discernment are, how independent his judgments can be. He sees the Church in America engaging with the business world, not to come to terms with it, but to make her spirit felt in it. From her engagement with the business world the Church has succeeded in leaving its impress upon

some segments of the business world; it has also gained something from its contact with the world of commerce. For example: "In associating herself here with existing patterns of organization and seeking, however indirectly, to work with them, she is coping with the social intractability of the individual male better, it would seem, than by launching new pious organizations for him which exist only on paper."

In the chapter entitled "Renaissance Myth" the author evaluates the Renaissance, viewing it in its true historical perspective, contrasting and correlating it with scholasticism in an attempt to show some of the erroneous attitudes toward the Renaissance prevalent in America today. He points out the tendency, especially among Catholics, to look upon the Renaissance as a kind of happy hunting grounds where one may take refuge in the past. The real posture of Catholic intellectuals should be a concern with history, not as a monument of the past, but as a means of preparing for the future. A correct evaluation of the Renaissance should help in that direction.

At a time when Catholics are indulging in the luxury of self-criticism, it is good to have a book of criticism like this, one based on true and vigorous scholarship, invested with a broad historical perspective, and imbued with a deep love of Christ and His Church.

P. M. McNamara, O.S.M., Carteret, N. J.

**FREUD, PSYCHOANALYSIS, CATHOLICISM**, by Peter J. R. Dempsey, O.F.M.Cap., H. Regnery Co., Chicago, 1956, 219 pp., \$3.00

Full of solid, well-digested thought on Freudian psychology in the light of Catholic thinking, Father Dempsey's present volume offers a precious guide for any adventurer into the shadowy world of psychoanalysis. Solid orthodoxy and enlightened sympathy for the tortured genius of Freud combine with alertness to the great man's blind spots. Any novice who essayed to read all the books on Freud that the author mentions in his selected bibliography would find himself submerged in meandering theories, applications, and details of interpretation. A broad and perceptive guide like Father Dempsey is precisely what he needs. Not that it is easy reading. The book demands constant, reflective attention although where it treats of Freud's life and religion the matter is completely fascinating. It might be called a sort of handy synthesis of St. Thomas and Freud on the psychology of human motivation. Father Dempsey knows as well as anyone that it is not a perfect



synthesis, for that would be impossible. These men were out of different molds. But he feels that the sincere quest of truth by the fitful light of genius led Freud to much that echoes in strange tongue the thoughts of the Angelic Doctor. Divided into three main sections, the book first provides a general perspective of psychology and the possibilities for a Christian-psychoanalytic synthesis. The second part gives an integrated analysis of basic concepts and the third adds an application of this synthesis to literature. This last section turns out to be an extended digression into the psychology of poetry and literature based chiefly on Aristotle with sidelights from Freud. Admirable in itself, it seems to be but insecurely joined to the book's main theme. Apart from this seeming breach of unity, which the reader will readily forgive, the book is admirably adapted to its purpose. Father Dempsey writes profoundly yet adorns his observations with intriguing quotations from people like Shakespeare, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Descartes, and Maritain. It is a treasure trove for the sharp-eyed collector of usable "quotes" and illustrations for the various Freudian concepts such as repression, regression, reaction formation, and rationalization. And one would look far for as neat a digest of Freudian thought as is contained in the chapters on "The Ego and Super Ego" and "Psychic Mechanisms." Throughout there is a balance and objectivity which guarantees fair treatment for Freud. Yet the author is obviously sound in Faith and philosophy, sure proof against the fallacies to which the ungrounded genius of his subject fell victim. While admitting profound admiration for the genius of Freud and his passionate pursuit of truth, Father Dempsey is fully aware that "genius is fallible and that truth is greater than any man."

Edward H. Nowlan, S.J., Assoc. Prof. Psychology,  
Boston College, Mass.

**THE SACRED HEART IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH,**  
by Margaret Williams, Sheed and Ward, N. Y., 1957, 248  
pp., \$3.75

Mother Williams' book is admirably suited to the audience she had in mind: not specifically theologians or historians, but any ordinary member of the Church Militant interested in knowing how devotion to the Sacred Heart grew up in the Church, or eager to meditate on what saints and scholars have said about the devotion, or glad to be assured of how thoroughly it has been approved and recommended by the



popes. The book is really an anthology, and the selections mostly speak for themselves. But since the aim was to show how the devotion developed historically, Mother Williams has provided links which put the selections in their contemporary context. These links are brief and modest. They will be helpful to the reader not already familiar with the material considered, and can if desired be omitted by those who feel more informed. They should not be passed over too easily, however, as they gracefully compress a quantity of relevant facts. The whole forms a very clear picture of the devotion, from its earliest beginnings through the *Haurietis Aquas*, including as many historical objections and doctrinal qualifications as the scope of the work requires.

But the main value of the book lies in the quotations, gathered over a long period of time, representing the best of many centuries' thought, prayer, and contemplation, and given at sufficient length not to distort the writers' own original sense. No single period or figure is allowed to dominate, and no aspect of the subject is stressed at the expense of any other. Of the 236 pages of the text, the last hundred deal with the period from 1794 to the present day, but this is to be expected, since the growth of the devotion has been most rapid since then, and the writings on it most numerous and varied.

Mother Williams has been careful to show how the devotion, though fostered among cloistered contemplatives, was never a merely "cloistered devotion," but was fairly early known and loved by lay Christians. It is, of course, especially in the past two centuries that the devotion has been "popular," and the book offers a comprehensive survey of the growth of that popularity. Excerpts from the writings of Father Mateo, and our present Holy Father's address to the families of France on family consecration soberly and impressively discuss this practice and its effects on society. The writings of many modern theologians show how the devotion is linked with all that is oldest in belief and newest in the world's need. The last chapters demonstrate how the elements present in the earliest statements of the devotion are still present; that is, how mystical intuition has been shown to be justified by the Gospels and tradition and to rest on the soundest doctrinal foundation. Mother Williams does not omit the expression of the devotion in literature, including three long poems by Claudel, Gertrud von Le Fort, and Edith Sitwell. She frankly discusses the inadequacy of its representation in art, admitting that "in perhaps no other subject of religious art is the challenge greater, failure more lamentable, and success more to be desired."

The book cannot fail to be of interest and help to many classes of readers. It can be best recommended as a storehouse of material for

meditation, and as a guide to further reading in more complete doctrinal studies, and in mystical works from the writings of St. Augustine to the revelations to Sister Josefa Menendez.

C. E. Maguire, Newton College, Mass.

**CONFERENCES ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE**, by Rev. Aloysius Biskupek, S.V.D., The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1957, 204 pp., \$3.50

*Conferences on the Religious Life* by Father Biskupek is one of those books of "solid reflections on the fundamental purposes of the spiritual life" which requires of the reader an all-out struggle to finish. When finally you turn the last page of the 35 conferences dealing with nearly every aspect of the religious state, you sigh thankfully and wonder why such a noble attempt to aid religious "achieve their goal of close unity with Christ in fellowship with the members of their community" must be so jejune.

To be sure, the author is orthodox, logical, and exhorts high holiness. And while certain of its points do demand serious consideration, the work fails to penetrate beneath the periphery of religious observance. What I found sorely lacking was any help in our striving to become other Christs, to deepen our knowledge and love of the living God and to strengthen our faith and trust in Him. It is highly anomalous that a book which "stresses the basic features of the spiritual life" should so neglect the interior development of the religious as to concentrate almost entirely on the external.

I cannot recommend *Conferences on the Religious Life* simply because there is little here that religious do not already know. We all realize that for the love of God and souls we must be mortified and kind, silent and recollected. What to do when our daily efforts to incorporate these virtues appear futile is not so evident and on this point Father Biskupek is not much help.

Brother Kevin, O.C.D., Holy Hill, Wis.